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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk May 15, 2016 Mid edition No 712

ELECTION

Parties respond to poll results

What can we read into county's recent trip to vote?

HISTORY

Evolution of Barnardo's

Children's home marks its 150th anniversary

EDUCATION

Grammar faces revolt

Pupils walked out, teachers upset and parents fume. Can the head survive?

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Don't let academy dispute become bitter class war

SOMEONE told me this week that everyone in the county loves the Kent Test until their child fails - at which point they oppose our school selective system with a passion.

It's hard to disagree, yet the divide of our selective system is highlighted again this week with the quite remarkable turn of events in Canterbury; a perfect storm of the county's hottest of education hot potatoes - academisation and grammar schools. The full details of which you can read on page 14.

Quite apart from what is happening there, the whole debate over academies which the government has flip-flopped over in recent weeks, is one which is particularly significant in Kent.

Not only are more secondary schools now out of local authority control, but it seems you don't have to wait long before you hear of a struggling non-selective being taken over by an academy trust.

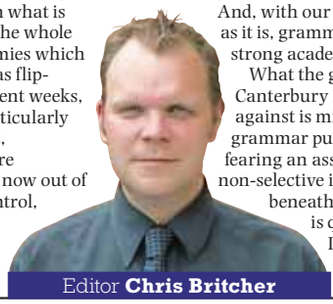
If you oppose academies - and plenty do - most will have to admit there is plenty of sense if a school is struggling for it to come under the wing of an establishment with strong management and loaded with an expectation of high aspirations and of parents playing an engaged, powerful, supporting role.

So often it is those two components which stand between swathes of our next generation's success or failure.

And, with our selective system as it is, grammars often make strong academy leaders.

What the good folk of Canterbury need to guard against is middle class grammar pupil parents fearing an association with a non-selective is somehow beneath them. In truth it is quite the opposite.

It could yet obscure already murky waters.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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Scott 'extremely proud' as he takes PCC office

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

COMMISSIONER: Matthew Scott officially began his term of office on Thursday

MATTHEW Scott said he was "extremely proud" as he began his term of office as Kent's police and crime commissioner on Thursday.

The Conservative party candidate, who won the election in Dover last Friday with 104,558 votes, is now focussing on working with Kent Police to deliver his six point plan for the county.

He pledges to cut crime and reduce re-offending, deliver value for money, ensure there is visible, effective and dedicated policing, put victims first, tackle the misery caused by abuse, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour and revolutionise the way the police deal with those suffering with mental health issues.

Mr Scott, who lives in Swanley with his wife, Nina, said: "I'm extremely proud to have been elected as Kent's new police and crime commissioner, and am thankful to everyone who turned out to vote for me.

"But whether you voted for me or not, I've signed an oath pledging impartiality and I am determined to do a good job for everyone in Kent; by holding the police to account, making sure they give a good service and allowing the public to hold me to account, too.

"Kent is a fantastic place and I want to make sure everyone feels safe and knows where to turn if they need help.

"That's why my initial priorities include increasing the police presence in our urban, rural and coastal communities and being as accessible to the public as I can be, by setting up a programme of public engagements and surgeries.

"I've already met with my staff and the chief constable to discuss my six point plan and I'm looking forward to working with the force and partner agencies to implement my vision.

"I'm also keen to meet as many people in Kent as possible."

Mr Scott has a significant political background, having worked in the office of Bexleyheath and Crayford MP David Evennett after studying public policy at university.

He moved up through the ranks and was his office manager – responsible for the smooth running of the team and ensuring the MP was fully briefed on all issues passing across his desk, as well as handling the budgets and HR issues, before leaving in March to fully concentrate on his campaign.

Report slams Medway youth jail as MoJ takes over running of centre

FOLLOWING a week of intense speculation, the government has finally confirmed that it is to take over the running of a secure training centre in Rochester, described by a new report as "a place of coercion".

Security company G4S announced back in February that it will be selling its children's services business, which includes the contract to manage the Medway Secure Training Centre.

The company came under fire earlier this year after undercover footage filmed by the BBC showed inmates at the centre being physically assaulted and bullied.

G4S then fired four members of staff involved before director, Ralph Merchant, stepped down.

Now, justice secretary Michael Gove has published a report written by an Independent Improvement Board appointed to investigate the centre's governance and safeguarding measures in place.

He said: "The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will take over the running of Medway in the short term – by the end of July – and will work closely with the Youth Justice Board on the enhanced monitoring arrangements that will be put in place.

"Steps will be taken to ensure that whistleblowers – including young people who speak out – are supported and listened to.

"However, the fundamental problem identified by the Independent Improvement Board was that those running Medway conceived of it as a place of coercion, where the culture and the incentives – as they were designed in the contracts – were centred around the corralling and control of children, rather than their full rehabilitation.

"Their focus should instead have been on education and care, on identifying root problems and giving children the opportunity to find their way back into society, and to make something of themselves."

MP backs plans for 12,000 homes and infrastructure

PLANS to develop a garden town in Shepway, that could create up to 12,000 homes, have been backed by Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins.

The plans were announced this month by Shepway District Council to help ease the government's housing crisis. The proposals, earmarked for the area surrounding Otterpool Manor Farm, could see thousands of new homes being built over the next 30 years within easy reach of nearby villages, towns and the countryside, but with its own businesses, schools and parks.

''This proposal is bold, and could create a large number of new jobs for local people over many years, as well as providing substantial investment into local services,'' Mr Collins said.

Police bail eight in Sheppey during crime network probe

POLICE have bailed eight men they arrested in Sheerness in connection with the supply of heroin and cocaine on the Isle of Sheppey.

Officers from Kent Police's Operation Jupiter team used search warrants in New Street and Queensway on May 4 as part of a probe into an organised crime network with links to Liverpool.

The suspects, aged between 22 and 36, were all arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to supply Class A drugs and have been bailed until August 30.

Detective Inspector Kevin Downard said: ''Our efforts to combat drugs throughout north Kent continue and I am confident these actions send strong message to criminals.''

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Major cash boost for popular pier and church

HERNE Bay Pier is to receive £48,500 towards refurbishment after being one of two Kent sites to benefit from a share in a £700,000 fund distributed by communities minster Mark Francois.

The cash for the pier is designed to "bring back the razzmatazz" and create a covered stage complete with lighting and changing room.

In addition, St Peter's Church in Sandwich was handed £49,000 to help it become a "sustainable tourist attraction". The Grade I-listed medieval site already attracts more than 50,000 visitors a year.

They are two of some 15 projects across the country who have received up to £50,000 and follows on from previous contributions via the Coastal Revival Fund.

Manston airport owners to submit plans for 2,500 homes later this month

By Tom Pyman

THE owners of the former Manston Airport site have announced their intention to submit plans to build 2,500 homes.

Stone Hill Park Ltd will deliver more than 1,000 pages of documents, setting out in detail the proposed regeneration of the site, to Thanet District Council later this month.

It comes after 12 months of consultation, including six public exhibitions, two newsletters delivered to 84,000 homes, and dozens of meetings with community groups, statutory organisations, businesses and others.

The owners say the development will deliver thousands of jobs, new homes, community and leisure facilities and acres of accessible green space to local people and a multi-million pound cash boost to local councils and emergency services, providing funds to kick-start the economy of the whole of east Kent.

SLAMMED: Sir Roger Gale

Ray Mallon, spokesman for Stone Hill Park, said: "In June last year we started with a blank sheet and asked the people of Thanet to help us design a new future for the site.

"At the first set of public exhibitions we set out our vision, 'to create something new and exciting that is commercially viable and brings real economic, social and environmental benefits to the local community and east Kent.'

"The planning application that Stone Hill Park Ltd is about to submit, will show how we have listened on all aspects of our scheme – from employment to heritage – to ensure that this vision is what local people want and is achieved over the next 20 years."

However, parties opposing the plans have responded in force, with Conservative MP for North Thanet Sir Roger Gale claiming the plans would not have "a snowball-in-hell's chance" of coming to fruition.

Earlier this year, three parties stepped forward to declare interest in the purchase of the airport.

It came after the council carried out a soft market testing exercise to seek interest in becoming an indemnity partner for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) of the airport.

RETIRING: Charlotte Edwards

Cricket queen Edwards calls time on career

CHARLOTTE Edwards has called time on a 20-year international career and will step down as England captain.

The 36-year-old who has been with Kent since 2000, made the announcement this week after days of speculation about her future.

Regarded as one of the very best in her field and a genuine sporting role model, Edwards retires from England duty as the top run-scorer and top appearance-maker, and is the only player - man or woman - to captain England in 200 internationals.

She led the Three Lions out on 220 occasions and cleaned up the honours during her stint in charge.

Edwards led England to the 2009 World Cup and World T20 titles, also winning four Ashes series against Australia.

Individually she also won the ICC women's cricketer of the year in 2008, a Wisden Cricketer of the year award in 2014, and has an MBE and CBE to put after her name.

She began to build a body of work that remains by a distance the most impressive in its field, setting the bar for team-mates and opponents alike.

For full reaction to the story, turn to our sports coverage on page 63 of this week's paper.

Manston to provide Stack help until 2017

THE roads minister has confirmed that plans to use Manston Airport as a temporary solution to Operation Stack are being extended until the end of 2017.

Andrew Jones made the revelation in a letter to Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately, in which he also confirmed plans for spaces at a lorry park - earmarked as the long-term solution to Stack by housing up to 4,000 vehicles - to become available as early as next summer.

Highways England revealed the routes lorries would take should such a situation arise last year before its consultation into plans for the park ended in January.

Dover-bound freight coming from the West will use the M20 to junction 7, Maidstone, where it will be diverted via the A249, M2, and A299 to Manston.

Dover-bound freight coming from the North (Dartford Crossing) will use the A2, M2 and A299 to Manston.

Murdered body left to rot for 9 months

POLICE have charged a man with murder following the discovery of human remains in Wincheap, believed to have been undiscovered for nine months.

Richard Donovan, 26, of Westhorne Avenue, Eltham, was due to appear before Medway Magistrates' Court via video link today on Friday.

At around 9.30am on April 25 a member of the public contacted police after decomposed human remains were found in a tent in woodland behind the Riverside Retail Park off of Ten Perch Road.

Officers attended and a scene was established, crime scene investigators worked at the location and evidence was gathered.

Following a post-mortem examination and forensic enquiries, officers were able to establish the deceased was male.

Other enquiries carried out at the scene have led officers to believe the deceased was a 60-year-old man and further forensic tests are underway in an effort to formerly identify him.

Work to locate any next of kin is on-going.

CPRE boost in fight against Farthingloe

THE Campaign to Protect Rural England has been granted leave to appeal against a judicial review judgement in its fight to save a Farthingloe site earmarked for housing development.

The Kent branch of the charity argued that the judge had been wrong to conclude that the application to build 521 houses and a 90-home retirement village at Farthingloe, near Dover, complied with planning law.

Dover District Council planning officers had criticised the density and layout of the scheme and recognised that it would have significant adverse impact on the AONB.

Councillors ignored this advice and agreed to the proposals without any mitigation measures.

CPRE Kent, Natural England, the Kent Downs AONB Unit and the National Trust all opposed the decision and now, a judge has said that CPRE Kent's arguments over mitigation to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) "raise an arguable point which has real prospects of success."

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Thanet MP takes live animal exports debate to Commons

By Emma Clark
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

OFFICIALS who want ports to have the power to block livestock exports have attacked the EU for taking away "sovereignty" from the UK.

South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay said his attempt to change law and give councils the choice of banning the export of live animals, as discussed in KoS last week, would be met by the "big boot of the EU".

Thanet District Council, which previously refused to accept cargoes of live animals at the Port of Ramsgate after evidence of animal cruelty in 2012, was forced by a High Court ruling to resume the trade.

Vote Leave has previously warned that EU rules leave the government powerless to stop livestock being forced to endure long journeys to their deaths overseas.

Mr Mackinlay said the court ruling had led to a "resumption of trade that nobody wants, through a port that's unsuitable, with local residents appalled that it is their port that is now being used for a trade that they find both unnecessary and many find distinctly abhorrent".

But the Tory MP suggested his attempt to amend the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847 during a ten minute rule motion would be fruitless in the face of the EU.

CHANGE: South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay wants a shift in the law on live exports

He told the Commons: "A long overdue amendment to the 1847 Act would give a greater degree of certainty to local authorities so that in future they may not face this type of legal action and that they could oppose the use of their municipally operated facilities for such transactions.

"If only this House were sovereign and able that an amendment that I put forward and taken forward through this House were to be accepted, that would be the end of the matter. Unfortunately there is the big boot of the EU to consider under the protection of free trade and the free movement of goods."

Eurosceptic Conservative David Nuttall (Bury North) said he opposed his colleague's amendment because it would be "wasting our time".

"We're simply giving the public the false impression that we are able to do something about this matter when we cannot," he said.

Academy trust plan for troubled school

A CASH-STRAPPED school in Broadstairs is set to be absorbed into an academy trust with Barton Court Grammar School in Canterbury to help ease its financial woes.

The Charles Dickens School was put into special measures in 2014 and its budget subsequently taken control of by Kent County Council after a damning Ofsted report.

Plans were revealed in a letter to parents.

Funeral for murdered Biddenden pensioner

THE funeral of a pensioner brutally murdered in his Biddenden cottage will take place next week.

Friends and family will gather at St Michael's Church, Smarden, on Wednesday, May 18, to pay their respects to Roy Blackman, 73, who was found with multiple blunt force injuries at his home in Headcorn Road on March 21.

Rail strike moved

A 24-HOUR strike planned by Southern rail conductors has been brought forward.

Initially scheduled for Friday, May 20, the walkout will now take place two days earlier, on Wednesday, May 18.

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Ebbsfleet garden city given boost of further 150 homes

THE Ebbsfleet garden city project has received a boost after it was announced that a further 154 homes have been approved.

The latest planning permission was given to David Wilson Homes for a new development of one to five bedroom properties in Castle Hill, Eastern Quarry

It comes as work starts on sites for a further 473 homes in the garden city, while last month, residential infrastructure and placemaking firm, Henley Camland, agreed terms for a significant portion of Eastern Quarry from Land Securities.

An integral part of the garden city plans, Eastern Quarry has outline planning permission for up to 6,250 residential units and comprises three main 'villages' situated across 500 acres of former quarry land.

Following completion of all placemaking and serviced land works, Eastern Quarry is anticipated to have a projected sale value for all residential units of around £1.5 billion.

In March, planning permission was granted for a new 420-pupil primary school in Castle Hill which is due to open in September 2017.

Blood scandal campaign nominated for top award

A KENT on Sunday campaign calling for justice for victims of the contaminated blood scandal has been nominated for an award recognising the power of local newspapers to lobby for positive change.

Over the last year publishers of this newspaper, Archant, has reported on the stories of local people who were infected with HIV and hepatitis C (hep C) in the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS.

We have backed calls for a fairer system of support for the 7,500 people nationwide whose health has been ruined and compensation for the families of the 2,000 who have died.

Now our campaign has been shortlisted for a Making a Difference award at the Society of Editors' Regional Press Awards which will be decided by a public vote.

We are asking readers to support the newspaper, and more importantly those who have bravely spoken out to campaign for justice, by voting for us.

Sue Threakall, of campaign group Tainted Blood, said: "You have shown an impressive determination to get our story out to the general public, and we cannot overstate the importance of this."

The polls open at the start of Local Newspaper Week on Monday, May 16 and the winner will be announced at the Society of Editors Regional Press Awards on Friday, May 20.

To vote for the Kent on Sunday's contaminated blood campaign, visit the website www.localnewspaperweek.co.uk/Making-a-Difference

Lounge returns in 2017

POPULAR Canterbury music festival Lounge on the Farm is to return next year, insists founder Sean Baker.

The event was last staged in 2014 but after having to leave its Merton Farm home, it has gone into hibernation. But it is now expected to return next summer.

Burrell named mayor

DARTFORD has confirmed John Burrell as its new mayor.

The Conservative councillor has represented the Stone ward on Dartford Borough Council since his election in 2011 and been a member of Stone Parish Council for eight years.

Toyah heads to park gig

TOYAH has been confirmed as this year's big name headliner of the free Dartford Festival in Central Park.

The singer, who has had 13 top 40 singles, will be appearing on Saturday, July 16. Last year's headliners were the band The Feeling.

City cinema site for sale

CANTERBURY's Odeon Cinema is going to be sold at auction for almost £3m.

The building has a guide price of £2.85m with Odeon holding a £178,000-a-year lease on the site until 2032.

The sale will take place on Thursday through auctioneers Acuitus.

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Top Three Stories

1. £30m coastal defences

Broomhill Sands scheme is complete

2. Tool thieves get 4 years

The gang stole in Tunbridge Wells

3. Smell sparks interest

Police found cannabis plants in Folkestone

The Essential Guide:

...to Manston airport

Everything you need to know about Kent's former international airport

FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: The Countess of Wessex is taking on a 450-mile palace to palace cycle challenge, which will see her ride from Edinburgh to London. See page 12 for full story and more images

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Top Three Blogs

1. Lorry lane needed

Why HGVs drive us round the bend

2. Time to step back?

Harrowing tales of gambling addiction

3. Straight outta uni

A young man's first step in the real world

Results of the *KoS* Online Poll

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3. It doesn't influence my vote - 25%
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Pieter Claassen - Implant Dentist at Hanover House Dental in Tonbridge

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Labour admits 'work to be done'

Sadiq Khan's victory in London was a major scalp for the party, but in Kent, Labour again failed to make headway in local elections and face an uphill struggle if they are to topple the Tories in 2020

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

ELECTION: Voters took to the polls to choose their police and crime commissioner and councillors in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells last week.

LABOUR chiefs in Kent admit there is still a lot of work to be done after an underwhelming set of election results locally last week.

The first public vote since Jeremy Corbyn was ushered in as Ed Miliband's successor as leader of the party in September, and the last until next month's widely-discussed EU referendum, it was always going to be significant.

While only the districts of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells had council seats up for grabs last Thursday, a new police and crime commissioner was also elected, but public apathy was apparent once again with turnout figures remaining despairingly low.

Conservative Matthew Scott was the victorious candidate, with Labour's Tristan Osborne – despite gaining a larger share of the vote than Harriet Yeo in 2012 – coming third behind Henry Bolton of Ukip.

A few miles up the M20, Labour claimed a major scalp as Sadiq Khan beat Zac Goldsmith to become mayor of London, but in one of England's largest counties, with an electorate of some 1.4million, the party failed to make real headway in an area where support is needed if it is to gather enough strength to topple an unpopular Conservative regime in 2020.

"It was certainly a mixed performance," Gordon Cowan, head of the Labour group at Kent County Council told KoS.

"While we managed to hang on to council control in some areas I think it's fair to say that we should be gaining more seats than we did, particularly in Kent.

"We've clearly got a lot more work to do in the forthcoming years to have a possibility of taking control of central government and really we should be doing slightly better than we are.

"I hope that over the next couple of years, people who believe in Labour policies will take that to the polls because they can see that current Tory policies are not working for ordinary people."

Appearing to fall behind Ukip and not just the Conservatives in Kent's popularity stakes, Cllr Cowan said he was under no illusions as to the challenge that lies ahead.

"We've never dismissed Ukip or any other up-and-coming party as a threat," he added.

"We're never complacent but we'll just keep trying to get the Labour message out there and hope that will drive people to vote for us over the next few years."

Mr Bolton told KoS last week of his anger that "tribal politics" had won out as voters chose Mr Scott over him, and the former White House advisor this week received the full backing of the party's leader on KCC, Roger Latchford.

"I was very saddened that Henry didn't get elected because without question he was an excellent candidate and quite possibly the best man for the job," he said.

"Everybody worked very hard to get him elected because he has such a wealth of experience, but regrettably this election was not fought on who was the best man for the job – it was Conservative tribal loyalties.

"That's not to say Henry was doomed from the start, he had every chance of winning, but it's difficult in a county as Conservative as Kent."

Few would argue that, on paper alone, Mr Bolton did indeed have the most comprehensive CV of the six candidates.

So between his inability to win the race and growing unrest in Thanet – where a number of councillors defected from the party last year after leader Chris Wells failed on his pre-election promise to deliver a solution at Manston airport – some may suggest Ukip's day in the sun is drawing to a close.

Next month's hotly-anticipated vote could be crucial for the future of the party – its reputation may well be shot if the public vote to remain in the EU when they take to the polls.

Certainly that's the view of Liberal Democrat leader Trudy Dean who told KoS: "I don't think they're going to go away anytime soon because Nigel Farage is a very persistent person, but a lot does rest on this vote.

"Clearly one of the main planks of their existence will be knocked away if they don't get the result they want.

"If they were a growing national power they would have made inroads in the local elections but I don't think that was the case."

Cllr Latchford, however, disagrees: "No, we certainly don't believe that would spell the end for us.

"We are in a very strong position ahead of the referendum, which we would not be having if it wasn't for Ukip."

Former South Thanet candidate and party leader Mr Farage would agree, and expressed his frustration this week that he wasn't invited to take part in the BBC's headline debate 48 hours before the vote, claiming bosses were trying to freeze him out.

While Labour and Ukip suffered blows, the Lib Dems themselves quietly made tentative steps towards something of a revival after a torrid year.

Despite not gaining overall control of Maidstone council, they made two gains from the Tories in the Maidstone elections, which traditionally proves a popular area for the party.

Cllr Dean added: "We were extremely pleased to make some gains and it was important as part of the fighting back process.

"It shows that the Lib Dem vote is still there, and while people found the coalition with the Tories difficult to support, that is now behind us and people are as willing as ever to vote for us."

VOTE: Matthew Scott was elected as Kent's PCC last Friday

For the Conservatives, despite the losses in Maidstone, between Mr Scott's victory and a gain in Tunbridge Wells – a borough in which the party has been particularly dominant – last Thursday represented another positive result.

Leader of the council Paul Carter said: "It's great to have a Conservative police and crime commissioner and I look forward to working closely with Matthew over the coming weeks. We're disappointed not to gain seats in Maidstone but pleased to see us remain steady in Tunbridge Wells."

Maidstone MP Helen Grant echoed Cllr Carter's sentiments and said: "Our team in Maidstone did very well indeed in the face of a traditionally difficult phase of the electoral cycle.

"We won the popular vote with 33 per cent beating the Lib Dems by a full six points and we are still the largest party at Maidstone Borough Council.

"Matt Scott's victory in the PCC election was decisive and I very much look forward to working with him on a number of ongoing initiatives including Operation Stack and our local rural speeding campaign in particular."

TRAINING: Countess has been getting ready for event since February

POWER: Sophie admits she has fallen off on several occasions

Sophie gets on her bike for DoE ride of a lifetime

Countess of Wessex, who was born and bred in Kent, has revealed she has spent recent months preparing for a gruelling 450-mile cycling challenge

RIDE: The 450-mile event takes place over several days in September this year

FAST: It is as part of celebrations to mark the anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards

LOCAL: Sophie grew up in Brenchley and attend school locally before meeting Prince Edward. All photographs on this page: Hannah McKay.

THE Countess of Wessex is taking on a 450-mile palace to palace cycle challenge, which will see her ride from Edinburgh to London.

Sophie, 51, who grew up in Brenchley and attended Kent College in Pembury before training to be a secretary at West Kent College in Tonbridge, will pedal from the Palace of Holyroodhouse to Buckingham Palace on behalf of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to celebrate the scheme's 60th anniversary.

The countess, who will complete the mammoth bike ride over seven days in September, admitted she is nervous, but looking forward to it.

She was pictured powering along in her cycle gear including white helmet, sunglasses, black leggings, black T-shirt with DofE logo, and turquoise and yellow trainers.

Sophie is making the 445-mile journey for her DofE Diamond Challenge – an initiative which asks people to tackle something new to raise awareness and money for the award scheme.

The countess said: "I am both excited and apprehensive to be undertaking this challenge.

"I have seen for myself the incredible impact the DofE has on every young life it touches, equipping young people with self-belief and motivation whatever their background or ability.

"So I had no hesitation in taking on a Diamond Challenge and hope this will encourage others to try their own."

The Duke of Edinburgh, Sophie's father-in-law, set up the award programme in 1956, inspired by his eccentric headmaster Kurt Hahn and his much-loved school days at Gordonstoun in north-east Scotland.

It has become one of the best known self-development and adventure schemes for 14 to 24-year-olds, with around 2.5 million awards achieved in the UK since its inception.

The countess will cycle the route with a small team of servicemen and women from four of her military affiliations – RAF Wittering, 5th Battalion The Rifles, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, and the Corps of Army Music.

The mother-of-two married Prince Edward in 1999.

Sophie, who has cycled occasionally with her children, Lady Louise Mountbatten-Windsor and James, Viscount Severn, chose to do the bike ride because long-distance cycling was something she had never tackled before.

She began training in February, giving herself seven months to prepare. In comments posted on the British monarchy's website, Sophie wrote: "Cycling is something I only tend to do with my children and never for more than the odd hour.

"It is something I've always found to be one of the more testing forms of exercise physically and mentally, so cycling it had to be. Yes, I have fallen off several times, but the bruises are fading and each time out gets a little better."

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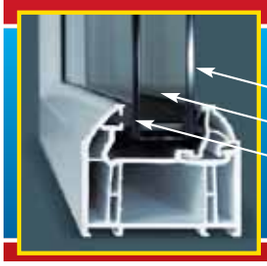

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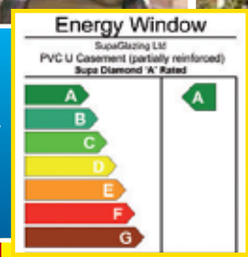

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Rebellion! Head in danger over academy furore

Pupils have walked out in protest, parents are up in arms and teachers are unhappy too. A **special report** on a remarkable row engulfing one of the county's top grammar schools...

By Chris Britcher
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PRESSURE on the head teacher of one of the county's leading grammar schools is intensifying in a hugely damaging row over its proposals to become an academy.

This week saw hundreds of pupils defy her wishes and stage a protest walk-out, teachers have been in talks with their union representatives, parents are becoming increasingly vocal and there is intense scrutiny over the academisation process itself.

It has left the Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School (SLGGS) in Canterbury – tradtionally one of the most in-demand schools in the cathedral city – rocking on its foundations.

A six-month consultation into the proposals end on Monday, May 6. Meanwhile a Kent County Council investigation, initiated by the school's governing body to review the procedure thus far, is on-going and expected to report back this week.

The key concerns centre on the way in which the school has pushed ahead with the plans. One campaigner described the process as "corrupt, unlawful and improper".

But while that issue is at the heart of the debate, the controversy has sparked, or reignited, a number of damaging fires which could yet claim significant victims; not least the school's enviable, and much cherished, reputation.

North & West

And it has left a major question mark hanging over head teacher Jane Robinson. She this week said she could not speak about any aspect of the academisation and that it was a matter for the governors.

The chair of governors at the school, Dr Ash Rehal, insisted he was still 100 per cent behind her – but shied away from saying she was secure in her job amid fears she had lost the support of staff, pupils and parents.

Dr Rehal told us: "As chair of the governors, I have complete and absolute confidence in Jane Robinson. I believe that is shared by the other governors."

But when asked if her position is now untenable he said simply: "I do not have a comment on that."

Mrs Robinson has been a head teacher for a number of years – in charge at the Queen Elizabeth's Grammar in Faversham before taking over the reigns at SLGGS eight years ago.

The last Ofsted inspection, in 2014, praised management at the school and the school is a consistent top performer.

The SLGGS wants to become what is known as a multi academy trust (MAT).

This means not only would it opt out of local authority control – like the majority of other Kent secondaries and grammars – but also adopt the Spires Academy in nearby Sturry.

The two schools have had close links since 2012, with Jane Robinson assuming the role of executive head.

But vocal critics say parents have not been sufficiently consulted and there are a number of conflicts of interest which muddy the waters.

Among them, is the fact Mrs Robinson's husband, Hugh Robinson, is a trustee of Spires and on its finance committee. There is no suggestion of impropriety but it is fanning the flames of discontent and creating a vicious rumour mill.

In addition, since Mrs Robinson took over as executive head, the Spires has seen its GCSE pass rates plummet to rank it as one of the worst performing schools in the county.

There are a host of mitigating factors which will have a bearing on that (see box off) but again it is concerning parents.

"If SLGGS had gone for an academy," explains Kent education consultant Peter Read, "and been open with everyone with what they were doing I don't think there would be a big issue.

"There would be a discussion and the governors could then vote on that and then consider to take on Spires Academy at a later stage."

SLGGS says the issue of academisation has been regularly discussed for several years. It appeared to have little choice when the government recently announced all schools would need to become academies by 2020, although education secretary Nicky Morgan has subsequently reversed that ruling.

And certainly a successful grammar becoming an academy would be far from unu-

UNION?: Head of Simon Langton Girls, above, Jane Robinson, below left, wants to embrace Spires, above, in a multi academy trust

sual. But it is the Spires element which appears to have raised the hackles of so many.

After securing just 17 per cent of its students with five GCSEs grade A*-C last year – the national benchmark is 40 per cent – Dominic Herrington, the regional school commissioner for the south east – a role which oversees problematic academies – sent what is known as a 'pre-warning' to Spires last September.

It warned its governors the school's performance was "unacceptably low" – pointing to plunging exam results, high levels of absenteeism and a disappointing Ofsted report.

The letter urged it to become part of an academy trust or face the government making the decision for them.

As a consequence, Simon Langton Girls', due to its existing relationship, swiftly initiated plans to become a multi academy trust so it could take it under its wing.

Again, a high performing school taking over another struggling one in the local area is not unusual, and indeed is encourage by government, so best practice can be shared.

But it is potential problems with the consultation process which could derail SLGGS's plans.

Adds Peter Read: "The consultation has been badly mishandled. That's the issue, that's where the concern is. Not the actual decision to become an academy. There would have been a fuss – as there always is – but that would have been manageable with a governing body that can explain what it's up to."

Mr Read says an email was sent to some parents about the proposal on December 5 last year, but not all received it. It was only when he stumbled across the consultation and published it on his education news website in January that many staff and parents became aware of what was happening, he says.

"What is clear," he adds, "is that the main incentive for conversion, the plan to keep Spires Academy from falling into other hands, remains a central driver of the application as can be seen in the consultation document of March 15. However, public statements appear to play down the strategy and focus on the perceived benefits of academisation.

"The attempt by governors to keep the plan as secret as possible has proved a disastrous strategy and has resulted in a heavy loss of confidence in the competence and integrity of school leaders.

"Perhaps like the recent government decision, they will be forced into a U-turn over academisation

"However, government policy remains clear that underperforming schools and academies will still be forced into joining multi academy trusts, even though there is no evidence these improve standards, so Spires Academy could be forced to go somewhere else."

Kent County Council this week confirmed it had been called in by the board of governors at SLGGS to review the procedure so far.

A spokesman for the authority said: "The governing body has asked KCC to check whether the process they followed to agree to academise and subsequently for Spires to join their multi academy trust followed the correct procedure. A number of parents have written to us as well as to the school and the Department for Education."

Richard Davis, who has a daughter at the

Continued from page 15

Continued from page 15

school, has become one of the most vocal critics. He explained to KoS: "Basically, if the KCC report says you've made errors then the recommendation will be to stop the process and that would take them back to square one – effectively to October last year.

"All the legal people we have spoken to say we have a case so it's hard to imagine KCC advice will differ from that.

"From our point of view we're on the verge of victory. If the process is put back then the move for Spires is unlikely to go ahead."

Away from the central point of the consultation process being followed, other issues have branched out. Teachers at the school have been in talks with union representatives this week amid mounting unease over the academisation.

Adds Mr Davis: "I have got to know a number of teachers as a result of this issue and morale is low and it has been under Mrs Robinson for some time. The teaching staff are wonderful and first class. But all the meetings I have had, many say they now work in a fearful environment but that is changing due to the overwhelming support of the parents and the girls."

However, this is not supported by the most recent Ofsted inspection in 2014

It stated leadership at the school was good and that "staffing is stable and morale is good" adding "teachers say that they feel well supported". In addition the governing board was also praised for its management.

In a remarkable move earlier this week, pupils at the school staged a walk-out in protest at the academy proposals – a protest focused more on the political issue of academies than the core issue of process which seems most likely to derail it. But it was a hugely embarrassing blow to head teacher Jane Robinson who, earlier in the week, had sent a fierce letter to parents warning that pupils were not to attend.

It said: "The governors wish to... point out that there are legalities in place here, and it is not lawful for any individuals or groups to arrange such a meeting on school premises without permission of the school, which of course would not be granted. It is an unfair lobbying process which would impede the progress of the school and students at a very important point in their lives."

With exams just around the corner, the school attempted to call an assembly to prevent sixth formers attending the meeting. However, many still did although they were then hit with a two-hour detention for doing so. A move which further enraged parents.

The letter prior to the protest from Mrs Robinson was also remarkably frank in the situation within the school. She wrote: "To come in to find stickers in several of the corridors with such comments as 'Robinson hates grammar schools – don't let her ruin Langton', 'Don't let the Gestapo silence us', 'Spires can sort out its own problems' are deeply shocking and upsetting, most particularly when our students do not behave in such a way, and have been set up to do this by a very few parents who should know better."

Pupils lined up overlooking the busy Old Dover Road to carry out the protest.

Asked if it would not make sense to simply press pause on the academisation process to allow current temperatures to cool, Dr Ash Rehal, SLGGS's chair of governors, refused to comment, saying simply that was a matter for the board of governors.

He added: "All I have to say is we are in middle of a consultation period that ends on Monday. We did agree with Kent County Council [to investigate] because we want everything to be open.

"The next full meeting of the governing body will be on May 25. That is when the next steps will be decided."

It is thought many SLGGS parents are concerned merging some central services and staff with Spires could impact on the grammar and drag it down – a claim widely derided by most experts and certainly not widely demonstrated when other high-performing schools have taken under-performing ones under their wing. Others have even made claims SLGGS may relinquish its grammar status – a suggestion which no one is lending any weight to and one described it as "preposterous" – but which is "stirring the pot" when it comes to parents and pupils alike. However, more than 1,100 have signed a petition calling for the academisation process to be halted.

May 25, it seems, will be one staff, parents, pupils and head teacher alike will see as judgement day.

CHALLENGES FACING THE SPIRES ACADEMY

THE Spires Academy was created from the ashes of the former Frank Montgomery School which closed in 2007.

Housed in a multi-million pound modern building, it's striking green exterior and logo a prominent landmark on the busy A28 linking Canterbury to Thanet.

But while it would be easy to point an accusing finger at the school, it suffers from a triple helping of woes distinct to this county.

Firstly, it is a non-selective, thus the top 20 per cent of 11-year-olds are whisked off instead to grammars for their first year of secondary education.

As a consequence, exams results will always fare poorly when compared with the grammars.

Secondly, it has a challenging catchment area. In a 'context' document it sent to the regional schools commissioner in response to its pre-warning letter last September, it explained: ''Historically the academy has served children who are overwhelmingly white working class and who, by definition, see themselves, or who are seen by others, as failures and which suffers from low aspiration and damaged self esteem.''

And, thirdly, its reputation has never put it on the map, thus it describes itself as a school ''traditionally bottom of the pile'' in the Canterbury district.

Add to that, it has also recently seen a big surge in its intake after the closure of the Chaucer Technology in the city meant existing pupils were redistributed, which put a strain on its staffing and resources.

Certainly its results have fluctuated widely over recent years. When SLGGS began its informal relationship with the school in 2012 its pass rate for GCSEs at A*-C grade including English and maths was a highly respectable 49 per cent.

However, it then nose-dived to 31 per cent the following year.

This can, in part at least, be attributed to the fact certain other, traditionally more vocational subjects and qualifications such as BTECS counted towards that score. After 2012 the rules were changed and they did not. Spires was by no means alone in seeing previously respectable figures plummet.

However, last year's 17 per cent pass rate was disappointing and was always going to ring alarm bells. With education such a political hot potato, schools failing to deliver are given little time to re-organise themselves before steps are taken.

Spires is already an academy – its key sponsors being Herne Bay-based Crown Products and Hythe's Holiday Extras.

In a statement issued to KoS this week, the two firms said: ''Michael Head from Crown Products and Gerry Pack from Holiday Extras were joint sponsors of the Spires Academy.

''Each put in £250,000 which is still invested in the academy. The income generated by the fund is used to the benefit of Spires' students.

''When the new multi academy trust is in place the fund will continue as it stands.''

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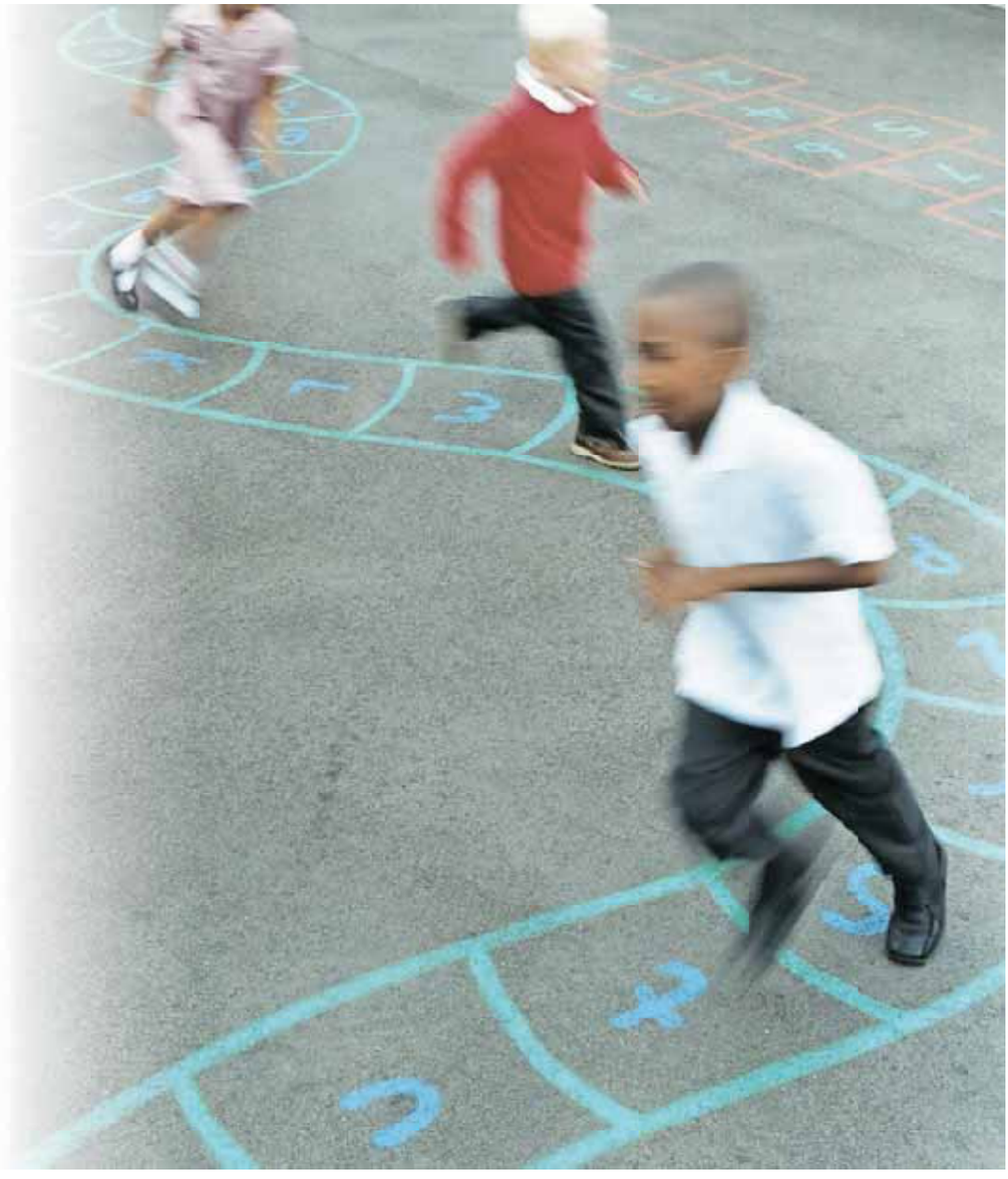
Towns still squeezed on primary school spots

Pressure continues on primary school places in our towns with many of our major centres now completely full. Education advisor and former head teacher **Peter Read** pores over the numbers to provide a town-by-town guide to the details...



TIGHT: As more and more homes are built, so the rise in the number of children puts pressure on existing availability

THIS year's increase of 591 in the number of children offered places in Kent primary school reception classes has been met with a similar increase in the number of school places available, and the welcome news that the proportion of children gaining a school of their choice has also increased, to a record in recent years of 96.7 per cent.

Overall, there are six per cent empty places, the same as last year, but these figures hide a growing number of local pressures focused on the towns.

The biggest problems this year are in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge where there are no empty spaces at all, Maidstone, one space, Gravesham, three, and Tunbridge Wells seven; each in just one school.

The ten most popular schools this year are: Fleetdown Primary, Dartford, and Loose Primary, Maidstone both turning away 53 first choices; Great Chart, Ashford, 41; Holy Trinity and St John's CofE, Margate, 38; St Joseph's RC in Northfleet, Sandgate in Folkestone, and Claremont in Tunbridge Wells all on 37; St Michael's CofE Infant in Maidstone, 35, St Crispin's Infant, Westgate on 34; and Herne Infant on 33.

At the other end of the scale, there are 14 schools with 50 per cent or more vacancies.

I would encourage parents to apply to go on the waiting list for any of their preferences that have not been offered, as there will be movement over the next four months.

This is your best chance of getting a school of your choice, as chances at appeal are generally very low because of infant class legislation which legally restricts class sizes.

For 2015 entry, of 426 primary appeals registered where infant class legislation applied, just two were upheld.

Further details of the towns under most pressure follow.

ASHFORD

AN extra 60 temporary places have been put in to meet rising demand. Some 30 of these are at Willesborough Infant School creating some spare capacity, but apart from this the only school with vacancies in the town is the new Finberry Primary Academy, with eight spaces, although these will fill as new housing developments in the area come on stream.

Great Chart, with 41 first choices turned away, and Kingsnorth CofE Primary with 28, are under extreme pressure because of building developments, and families buying new houses here are in for a great shock when they discover there are no school places nearby.

DARTFORD

JUST three per cent of vacancies in the district, the large majority in two town schools, Temple Hill and Wentworth.

These are two of the three schools along with Brent Primary, that have seen an additional 90 temporary places created after applications were received to ease the pressure.

Fleetdown Primary turned away 53 first choices, sharing the position of most oversubscribed school in Kent, Dartford Bridge Community (23) and Our Lady's Catholic (20) also proving popular.

GRAVESHAM

JUST three places available in town, all at Tymberwood Academy, with 78 families getting none of their choices, by some way the highest figure in Kent. Around 90 additional places were created this year, 30 each at Singlewell, St John's and Westcourt, just averting a disaster. Most oversubscribed school is St Joseph's Catholic, turning away 37 first choices, with Cecil Road and St John's Catholic on 31.

Four schools account for the large majority of the local authority allocations for those with no school of their choice – Westcourt with 25 and three academies, Whitehill with 21, and Chantry and Tymberwood Academy with 13.

Each year I am contacted by parents offered what appear to be absurd alternatives, often from Northfleet, given schools the other side of the borough, or else over the A2 and into the countryside at Istead Rise.

MAIDSTONE

JUST one vacancy in one school in town, at Tree Tops Academy. Most oversubscribed school is Loose, one of the two most popular primary schools in the county, with 53 first choices turned down, followed by St Michael's Infants with 35 losing out, closely followed by Brunswick House with 32.

Some 58 children got no school of their choice, all but four being allocated to Barming, Palace Wood and Tree Tops. Jubilee Primary Free School has had its intake reduced from 60 to 30 by the council because of planning problems with its temporary premises, and has just filled.

The new Langley Park Primary has 22 offers for its 60 places in its first year of operation, with the pressure on places seen from the 13 local authority allocations made to the school, with some children who will need to be bussed from the other side of town.

SEVENOAKS

NONE of the five town schools have vacancies, but levels of oversubscription have fallen across the board.

Most oversubscribed this year is Lady Boswell's CofE, turning away 24 fist choices, Riverhead Infants having fallen sharply to 10.

FOLKESTONE

A MUCH improved situation from last year, with the number of chil-

Continued on page 20

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Continued from page 19

dren allocated schools they hadn't applied to falling from 38 to 23, spread across the town.

Sandgate is still the most popular school, with 37 first choices rejected, although sharply down on last year's 67, when the school was the most oversubscribed in Kent. Other popular schools are Stella Maris Catholic (17), and St Eanswythe's CofE (16).

The new Martello Grove Academy is struggling to attract numbers with just eight of its 30 places filled.

SWALE

MOST oversubscribed school in Sittingbourne is Canterbury Road Primary turning away 21 first choices, followed by Grove Park, 14 and Kemsley Primary Academy, 13. Just four out of 14 schools with vacancies, nearly all at Lansdowne with 18. Plenty of places on the Isle of Sheppey, with just three of the ten schools full.

In Faversham, just five places left in Bysing Wood Primary out of the eight schools, which also had four of the five children allocated by KCC.

However, Ethelbert Road, Ofsted 'outstanding', was the only school heavily oversubscribed turning away 27 disappointed first choices.

THANET

IN recent years, one of the most pressured districts, but an additional 90 places have been created by the extension of St George's CofE Foundation (secondary) to become an all through school and 30 places added at Birchington CofE.

Whilst these ensure there are 45 places vacant across the 28 schools, they are all in just five schools, most at Dame Janet Primary Academy, 54, and Ramsgate Free School, 45.

Most popular school again is Holy Trinity & St John's CofE, with 38 disappointed first choices, followed by St Crispin's Community Infants, 34 and Callis Grange Infants, 30.

TONBRIDGE

TONBRIDGE is very tight again for 2016, with no vacancies in town. The delay in opening the new Bishop Chavasse Free School, set back to September 2017, has obviously exacerbated the pressures.

However, all but 22 of the 608 applications were awarded one of their three choices, 20 of these being allocated to Long Mead Community.

Most oversubscribed school is Sussex Road, 24 first choices rejected, followed by Stocks Green with 16 and Slade, 11.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

JUST eight places empty this year, all at St Augustine's Catholic, although 903 out of the 947 children received one of their three choices, most of the remainder, 29, being allocated by KCC to Temple Grove Academy.

Most oversubscribed school is the ever popular Claremont, turning away 37 first choices, followed by St James' CofE Infant with 26, and Langton Green with 18.

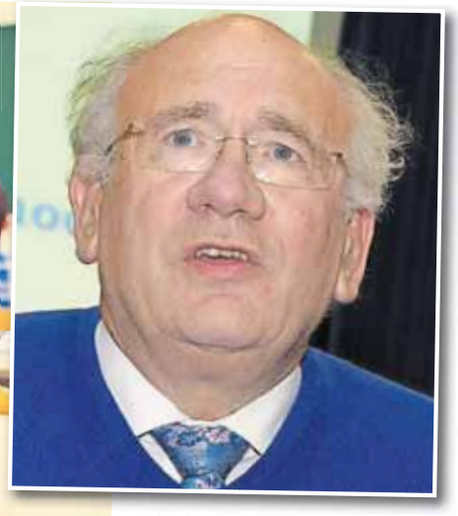
JUNIOR SCHOOLS

THESE tend to have a defined intake from paired infant schools whose pupils have priority for spaces.

However, some families in all through primary schools who may not be particularly happy with their current school, or who have moved into the area, also take the opportunity to apply for additional or vacant places, with the result that 15 of the 28 junior schools in Kent are oversubscribed, most by small numbers.

The three most popular are: Christ Church CofE Junior, 22 first choices turned away, and St Saviour's CofE Junior, with 12, both from Thanet: along with Whitstable & Seasalter Endowed, with 11.

■ Find out more about these figures and other education issues on author Peter Read's popular website. Visit: www.kentadvice.co.uk.



CONCERNS: Education advisor Peter Read, above, says our towns now have almost no flexibility when it comes to accepting children in their primary schools

Evolution of the world of Barnardo's

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Dr Barnardo setting up the first of his famous children's homes. We look back at the charity and those who worked at its homes across the years in the county

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

WHEN Dr Thomas Barnardo first set out on his campaign to change the lives of destitute children in 1867, not even he could have predicted the legacy his work would go on to leave, and none more so than here in Kent.

As the Barnardo's charity celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, it reflects on a century and a half of care for young people in need, during which time the nature of its services has changed drastically.

Abandoning his dream of a life as a medical missionary in China, Dr Barnardo set up the Ragged School in London in 1867 to give poor children a basic education.

Three years later he established his first home for youngsters, providing them with training so they could make their own way in the world as adults.

His philosophy was that no child should be turned away and by the time of his death in 1905 there were nearly 100 homes around the country caring for more than 8,500 children; a number of them here in the county.

By the middle of the last century the nation's attitude towards childcare had changed and for the first time local authorities were given responsibility.

Barnardo's was at the forefront of this change and by the end of the 1950s almost a quarter of the charity's work involved helping children to stay with their own families.

As the evolution in childcare continued Barnardo's increased its fostering and adoption work, set up family centres and worked to improve the lives of youngsters with disabilities.

Today, Barnardo's works with more than 240,000 of the UK's most vulnerable children, young people,

Continued on page 22

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Continued from page 21

parents and carers running nearly 900 projects around the United Kingdom.

The charity's chief executive, Javed Khan, said: "The greatest challenge we face now in 2016 is that the demand for our services from vulnerable children, young people and our families is outstripping our ability to meet those needs.

"A quarter of a million children are now supported through our charitable work."

This week celebrity chef Rosemary Shrager made a special cake at her Tunbridge Wells kitchen for a garden party at Buckingham Palace to help celebrate the charity's birthday.

It represented the latest link between Barnardo's and the county – one which stretches back decades.

The charity ran hundreds of children's homes and orphanages until the 1970s throughout the country, with bases in areas of Kent including Canterbury, Sidcup, Westerham, Folkestone, Maidstone, Yalding and Beckenham.

Perhaps its most recognisable was the home known as Babies' Castle in Hawkhurst, near Tunbridge Wells.

Joyce Saunders is a former nurse at the home and today gives talks on the charity's history and work in the county.

After leaving school in the capital in 1959, she began training as a nurse before working in that role at the Babies' Castle for five years.

"It was built in 1886 and it was the first home built for babies outside London and it was in the shape of a huge castle," she told KoS.

"Perhaps contrary to common perception, they weren't all orphans, some were from broken homes and illegitimate children were not really accepted back then so it provided a safe home for them.

"We once had a family of four brothers and sisters come in and we managed to keep them all together."

However, the home closed down in 1965 as the charity began its shift in the way it provided services to children, which continues to evolve up to the modern day.

The building on Cranbrook Road was used for 30 years as a home to people with learning difficulties before being left derelict and ultimately being demolished last year.

"It was a shame because it was such a special building," Mrs Saunders added. "Reading the newspapers these days I think they'd be much better off if these homes were still active, but life has changed so much and the problems we face now are so different to 50 years ago.

"We have reunions every five years. One time in the late 70s we had a couple come and they remembered everything from when they were in there, which is remarkable.

"Obviously that isn't going to be the case for everyone because some of them were, of course, just babies."

Some, however, will always have a negative perception of such homes, and what some describe as a child migration scandal, but Mrs Saunders is fully supportive of its work.

"I've only got fond memories of my time there, it was a wonderful place and the children were all very well looked after - they all regarded it as their home.

"The first thing you think of when you hear the name Barnardo's is them shipping children off to Australia, and that's true, but Barnardo's do a simply wonderful job from babies and toddlers all the way through to teenagers.

"We had a lot of mixed-race children come down from London but there was never any hint of a race issue, they all got along so well.

"With our children it was simply 'play, play, play' and they had complete freedom, but things are very different now and you have to start learning so early."

Barnardo's no longer operate any children's homes like Babies' Castle, with young people now coming to the charity for support in a range of issues, including drugs misuse, mental health, child sexual exploitation, youth crime and domestic violence.

Jonathan Whalley, director of children's services in the south east, explained the changes: "People think of us being purely orphanages and charity shops but we do such a wide range of projects to help children."

Among these projects are special schools, children's centres and nurseries in Tunbridge Wells and a service in Folkestone that works with young girls at risk of abuse or teenage pregnancy.

Of those that receive ratings from Ofsted and other similar bodies, they all come away with top marks.

"In terms of issues specific to Kent, the borders at Calais obviously have a huge impact and we are there to support Kent and those children who arrive with no family, but we need volunteers to work with those because the pressure is rising.

"We don't have children living rough on the streets in the same way we did years ago, and it's now about setting them up in a family environment, which is why we're keen to drive our fostering services in Kent - it's much more community-based now," he added.

The county council recently launched an appeal for more carers to coincide with Foster Care Fortnight, which launches on Monday, insisting those that step forward will receive local support in their community as well as a local social workers.

However, tackling an online threat is perhaps the latest challenge for Barnardo's and it is one Mr Whalley says they have to face head-on.

"Services are unrecognisable from when I was a child," he told KoS. "The use of social media for example is a powerful danger in terms of things like cyber bullying, which wasn't an issue decades ago. I've got teenagers myself and it's worrying because you don't know who is online or what they might do.

"It's hard for us to imagine a world without Twitter but that's only ten years old.

"We live in an enlightened age and young people have incredible access to information so who knows what the next few years will bring.

"The ideal situation is that in another 150 years there will be no need for Barnardo's, however our motto is '150 years and always' so we're not going to stop."

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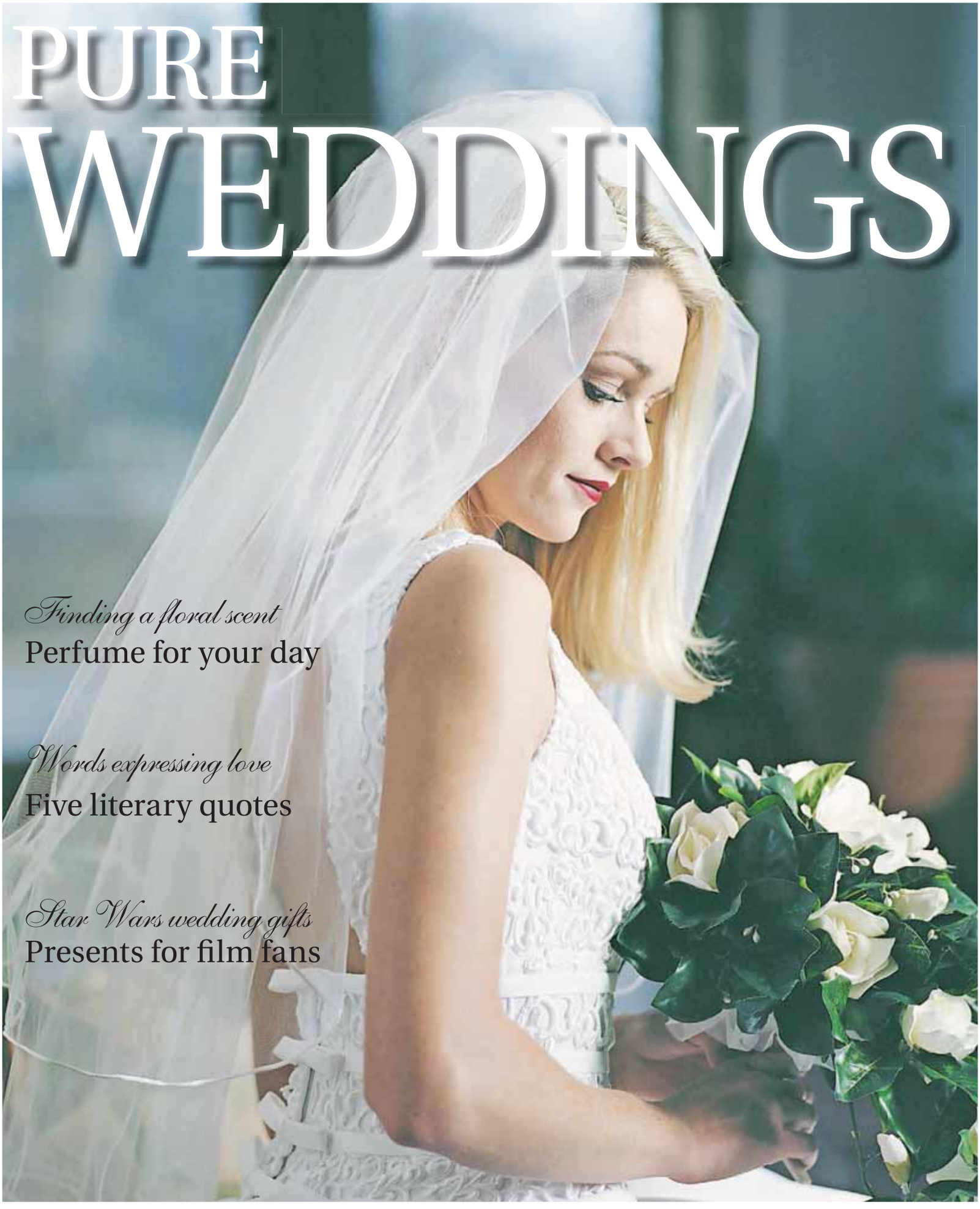

Finding a floral scent
Perfume for your day

Words expressing love
Five literary quotes

Star Wars wedding gifts
Presents for film fans

Picking out the perfect scent to wear on your special day

IF your wedding is fast approaching, now is the time to start thinking about what perfume you would like to be wearing when you take your vows.

Maybe you already have a firm favourite, or perhaps you're looking to try something new?

For those looking for inspiration - there are plenty of floral scents available for you to consider trying and now is the perfect time to start looking around.

Thanks to a number of flower and foliage-inspired fragrances that have landed this spring, you can enjoy the scents of gardens in full bloom on your big day.

Here are 10 of the floral scents that are available to buy now.

From subtle and herbaceous, to sweet and heady, there's a scent for everyone, you'll just have to pick your own.

The wild one

Part of the limited edition Herb Garden collection, Jo Malone Wild Strawberry and Parsley, which costs £44 for 30ml, melds the savoury tang of flat-leaf parsley with the juicy sweetness of strawberry and blackcurrant, resulting in a gorgeously green blend.

For further details visit www.jomalone.co.uk.

The queen of flowers

Opening with a burst of ravishing pink rose, L'Occitane Violette and Rose de Mai Eau de Toilette, which is £52 for 75ml, dries down to reveal a heart of zesty mandarin and bergamot. Musk and sandalwood combine to complete this complex,

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The personal perfume

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Visit www.harveynichols.com to purchase.

The Italian job

Imagine a cool breeze rolling in off the Ligurian Sea, as you stroll through a sun-dappled lemon orchard on the Italian Riviera.

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Visit www.johnlewis.com for details.

The fruit cocktail

Diptyque Eau de Sens Eau de Toilette, £60 for 50ml, takes a new approach to citrus, combining elements of orange tree blossom, peel and flowers.

Rounding out that acidic trio with musky angelica and patchouli, the florals really shine through.

Visit www.johnlewis.com for details.

The dark horse

A delicate floral threesome - rose, carnation and lily of the valley - is elevated to heady new heights by liquorice and fig in MOR's deeply enveloping Rosa Noir Eau de Parfum, £39 for 100ml.

Visit www.feelunique.com.

The fresh star

Giving the familiar floral a new lease of life, Molton Brown Dewy Lily Of The Valley and Star Anise Eau de Toilette, £39 for 50ml, adds spicy star anise into the mix, plus magnolia, peony and white musk, making it as fresh and bright as a spring morning.

Visit www.molton-brown.co.uk for details.

The literary agent

The next volume in Amouage's Library Collection is anything but by the book. Opus X Eau de Parfum, £180 for 50ml, is a bold confluence of no less than four rose notes, ably assisted by geranium, leather, oud and rich ylang-ylang.

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The sugar rush

Like a cool Cosmopolitan on a hot New York night, DKNY Summer for Women Limited Edition, £44 for 100ml, is a sparking medley of goji berry, peach bellini, water lily, violet and rose, that will satisfy any sweet tooth.

Available from www.superdrug.com.

The power player

The latest launch in the Eclectic Elements collection, Bronnley Zealous Flower Eau de Toilette, £35 for 50ml, combines jasmine and rose notes with fruity pear and mandarin, pink pepper and amber, adding both warmth and depth.

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Saturdays - £5,500.00 - available on: 13, 20, August (usually £6,580.00). 4, 11, 18, 25 February. 4, 11 March (usually £5,810.00). Additional day guests charged at £66pp, additional evening guests charged at £17.50pp.

Sundays - £3,450.00 - available on: 5 June. 3, 24, July. 14, 21 August. (usually £4,150.00) 11, 25 September. 13, 20, 27 November (usually £3,600.00). 5, 12, 19, 26 February. 5, 12, 19, 26 March (usually £3,600.00). Additional day guests charged at £58pp, additional evening guests charged at £17.50pp.

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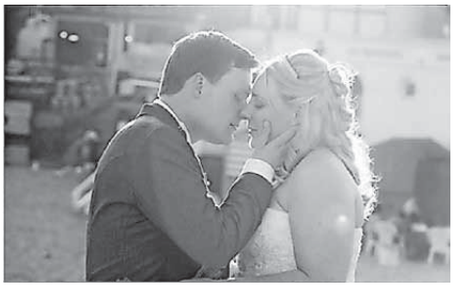

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Literary quotes to express emotion

For many part of their wedding day will be the speeches.

Traditionally speeches will be given by the father of the bride, the groom and the best man, but you can choose to incorporate other readings into the reception or wedding ceremony if you want to.

If you have a speech to write and you are looking for some inspiration, plenty of books feature beautifully-written ideas about love.

You may even choose to include one of these quotes in your speech.

Here are five quotes about love which have been chosen from books past and present.

"I have for the first time found what I can truly love - I have found you. You are my sympathy, my better self, my good angel. I am bound to you with a strong attachment. I think you good, gifted, lovely: a fervent, a solemn passion is conceived in my heart; it leans to you, draws you to my centre and spring of life, wrap my existence around you and, kindling in pure, powerful flame, fuses you and me into one."

Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre.

"I love you. I am who I am because of you. You are every reason, every hope and every dream I've ever had and no matter what happens to us in the future, every day we are together is the greatest day of my life. I will always be yours."

Nicholas Sparks, The Notebook.

"Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides, you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots are so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because that is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises and eternal passion, it is not the desire to mate every second minute of the day.

"That is just being 'in love', which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident."

Louis de Bernieres, Captain Corelli's Mandolin.

"He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem a part of it."

Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights.

"People are like cities. We all have alleys and gardens and secret rooftops and places where daisies sprout between the sidewalk cracks, but most of the time all we let each other see is a postcard glimpse of a skyline or a polished square. Love lets you find those hidden places in another person, even the ones they didn't know were there, even the ones they wouldn't have thought to call beautiful themselves."

Hilary T Smith, Wild Awake.

Steps to give you smile

WHEN it comes to your wedding, a lot of smiling photographs will be taken of you and your spouse on your special day.

If you want to make sure that your smile is at its best, there are a number of steps you can take to care for your teeth and lips before the big day.

An abundance of at-home products can produce convincing transformations with minimum commitment. Think subtle tweaks, rather than dayglo fakery.

From pearly whites to pout plumping, try this step-by-step guide.

Teeth brightening

If you're hoping to get your teeth that little bit whiter before the big day, there are a number of ways you can make this happen.

Graham Barnby, dental care expert and Arm and Hammer ambassador, says: "Boost your smile confidence by removing stains and brightening teeth, using a non-abrasive whitening toothpaste. Used twice daily, you should begin to notice a difference in five days."

Amp up the whiteness with a safe, DIY booster that won't damage tooth enamel. There are countless techniques, from dissolvable strips to 100 per cent natural charcoal polish.

Be mindful of what you eat and drink too, if you're dedicated to upping the whiteness.

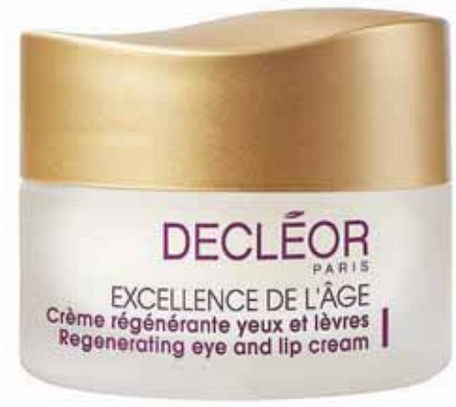
Mr Barnby lists coffee, tea, red wine, curry and fried foods as prime teeth stainers.

Arm and Hammer Truly Radiant Whitening and Enamel Strengthening Baking Soda Toothpaste is £3.75 from Boots; Rapid White Express Max Effect 5-Minute Tooth Whitening Strips are £22.99 from Boots and Diamond Whites Black Edition Tooth Polish is £14.99 from diamondwhites.co.uk.

Lip priming

Whether your teeth are the star attraction or not, hydrated, plump lips can dramatically improve a

worth photographing



SMILE: There are a number of ways to take care of your teeth and lips before the big day

smile. If you are hiring a make up artist, then speak to them about the look you are hoping to achieve.

If you are doing your own make up, then here are some steps on how to care for your lips prior to the wedding.

"Lips need to look smooth and moist for lip products to look their best," says Rupert Kingston, creative director of Delilah cosmetics.

He suggests exfoliating with a gentle sugar scrub and using a healing lip balm.

If fine lines are your bugbear, use a light eye and lip cream to tighten and plump the contours daily.

Before you reach for your lipstick bullet, prep around your mouth for a smooth finish.

"Start by using a primer, concentrating on the nasolabial folds [smile lines] and any creases that run through the lip line," Mr Kingston suggests.

"Then use a brightening cream concealer through the same areas, to lift out any shadows."

Decleor Excellence De L'age Regenerating Eye and Lip Cream is £53.50 from www.decleor.co.uk; Bliss Fabulips Sugar Lip Scrub is £14 from blissworld.co.uk and Too Faced Lip Insurance Lip Primer is £14.50 from Debenhams.

Smile enhancing

The type of lip product you use can be a cheat in itself, in the quest for whiter-looking teeth and juicier lips.

If you're after instant lip volume, you could opt for a plumping gloss containing chilli extracts and light-reflecting particles.

For brighter teeth, you can create the instant illusion of whiteness simply by using the right shade of lipstick: "A red or pink lipstick with a blue tone or subtle amount of blue pearl can be very flattering, because it makes your eyes and teeth look whiter and brighter," says Poppy King, founder of Lipstick Queen.

Conversely, brown and peachy tone lipsticks can bring out the yellow in your teeth, so avoid these if you're on a whiter-than-white mission.

Don't be daunted by full-on blue lip products either. "They actually give lips more of a berry tint," explains Ms King, "and they're perfect for maximising a brighter smile."

ArtDeco Hot Chilli Lip Booster is £12.79 from Debenhams; Delilah Colour Intense Cream Lipstick in Vintage is £24 from Space NK and Lipstick Queen Hello Sailor Lip Gloss is £22 from Space NK.

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Wedding gifts for fans of Star Wars

If you know some Star Wars fans who will be getting married soon, there are some great themed gifts that you can get them if you're looking for something a little different.

With the release of the new films being a hot topic, there is no shortage of Star Wars items available right now.

If the couple don't have a wedding list or haven't asked for anything specific, then a Star Wars gift could be a nice surprise.

Ranging in size and price, here six of the best presents for buy from a bride or groom with a love of the iconic films.

SURPRISE: The chop sabers could make a good wedding gift

PRESENT: The Star Wars mug is available online

Light mood

Death Star Mood Light, £19.95, from www.prezzybox.com.

If your computer is situated on the dark side of the room (sorry), brighten it up with this USB-powered mood light. An exact replica of the 1977 Death Star, the battleship comes to life when you lightly press the surface. It gives off a strong white glow creating a peaceful environment in your room - well, as relaxing as a light inspired by a Galactic Empire weapon can be.

Chop chop!

Star Wars Light-Up Chop Sabers, £15.99, from www.firebox.com.

Use the force to eat your evening meal, with these themed chop sticks. Powered by watch batteries (included) they light up at the click of a button. They're not just a fun novelty though; they're fully functioning, lightweight and easy to grip. Available in three colours, Darth Vader (red), Yoda (green) and Luke Skywalker (blue), you can reuse them, but you'll want to handwash them rather than stick them in the dishwasher.

Roll on

Sphero BB-8 Droid, currently £103.99, from www.amazon.co.uk.

Released to coincide with last year's Star Wars: The Force Awakens release, this gadget has proved incredibly popular. The palm-sized droid with a magnetic head spins, turns and speeds off while making all the noises and expressions of the well-loved film character. You control it via your smartphone/tablet and it connects via Bluetooth. The app allows you to operate the little fellow by voice commands and you can create holographic videos with it too.

Your cup of tea

Star Wars Mug with Sound, £11.95, from www.red5.co.uk.

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THEMED: BB-8 Droid gadget

GIFTS: Inflatable R2-D2 (left) and the Death Star Mood Light

Wars? This is the gadget for you! The decent-sized mug comes not only with Star Wars characters wrapped around it, but will also play sound effects when you take a sip! There are six sounds - including the swish of a lightsaber and Chewbacca's roar. Just make sure you've got a chocolate bar right next to you to go alongside your hot drink, otherwise you'll be craving a Galaxy (that's) far, far away.

Take control

Star Wars RC Inflatable R2-D2, £13.99, from www.argos.co.uk

At two-foot tall, this is one of the larger radio control toys you'll come across; it's also one of the more exciting ones too! Inflate the droid, then attach the R/C unit) to R2-D2's base, then it's just a case of using the controller to send R2-D2 on his way. Not only does he go backwards and forwards but he spins 360 degrees and makes four noises as he goes. When you've finished playing you can of course deflate the Star Wars legend, making it an easy-to-store toy.

Lap it up

HP 15.6 in Special Edition Star Wars Laptop with Windows 10 6GB RAM & 1TB HDD, £529, from www.qvcuk.com.

Given the price tag, this is one for serious Star Wars fans. The special edition HP laptop not only comes with a design inspired by the film franchise - including a rather dashing red backlit keyboard - but with a collection of rare Star Wars content pre-loaded on it. There's original trilogy storyboards, wallpapers and screen savers too. Aside from that, this is a powerful laptop, there's a 1TB hard drive and 6GB RAM so it will run smoothly even if you've got lots of programmes running at the same time. It's also powered by an Intel Core i5-6200U processor which will keep things running quickly.

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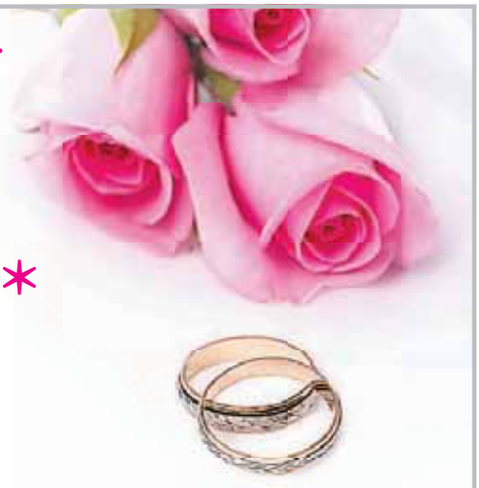

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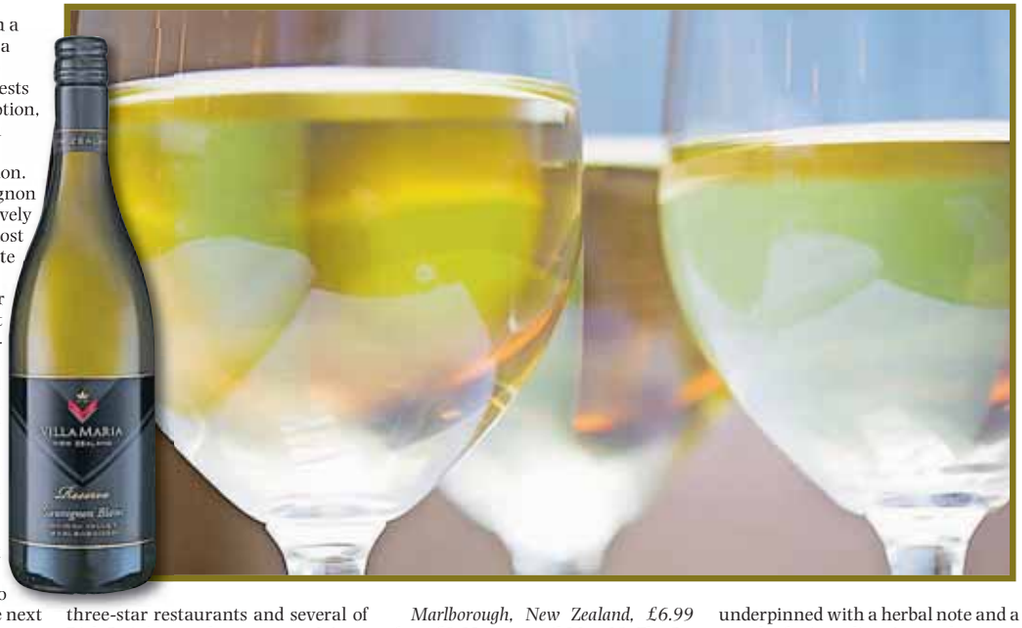
Raising a glass to grape with star quality



IF you're getting married in a venue which doesn't have a bar, leaving it up to you to supply alcohol for your guests to enjoy during your reception, there are a number of wines you might like to consider buying.

One popular choice is sauvignon.

Easy to pronounce, sauvignon (saw-vee-nyon) is one of those lovely words that flows sweetly and, most importantly, one of our favourite wines to drink.

Whether you have a thirst for sauvignon blanc or cabernet sauvignon, these kissing cousins travel well, can stand alone or be blended and have achieved such success in certain regions that you can pretty much rely on the quality.

Both grapes have distinctive flavours and, in the hands of a good producer, will deliver the quality and drinking pleasure that makes you want to drink them time and time again.

Here are some sauvignons to leave you looking forward to the next glass.

Chateau Bauduc: Bauduc Blanc 2015

France, £9.95 from www.fromvineyardsdirect.com.

Eminently drinkable and the house white in all of Gordon Ramsay's three-star restaurants and several of Rick Stein's... need we say more? A sophisticated style that's fruity and flowery, the peachy, citrusy, gooseberry flavours are delightfully fresh with an appealing herbal grassiness and refreshing acidity on the finish.

The Ned Sauvignon Blanc 2015

Marlborough, New Zealand, £6.99 from £9.35, now until May 18, The Co-operative.

Value and consistency are among the hallmarks of New Zealand's most famous export and you can't go wrong with a juicy white that marries passion fruit ripeness with zingy grapefruit and gooseberry freshness, underpinned with a herbal note and a streak of minerality. A mouth-watering example by the highly rated winemaker Brent Harris.

Villa Maria Reserve Wairau Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2015

Marlborough, New Zealand, £13.99 from Majestic.

One of New Zealand's most awarded wineries, the Reserve level offers all the fabulousness you would expect, but with a concentration that's pure genius. Awarded 91 points by American wine critic James Suckling, you can buy this wine with confidence knowing you'll be rewarded with an elixir of aromatics, gooseberry, melon and guava flavours, bracing herbs and a fine acidity on the grassy finish.

Warwick The First Lady Cabernet Sauvignon 2013

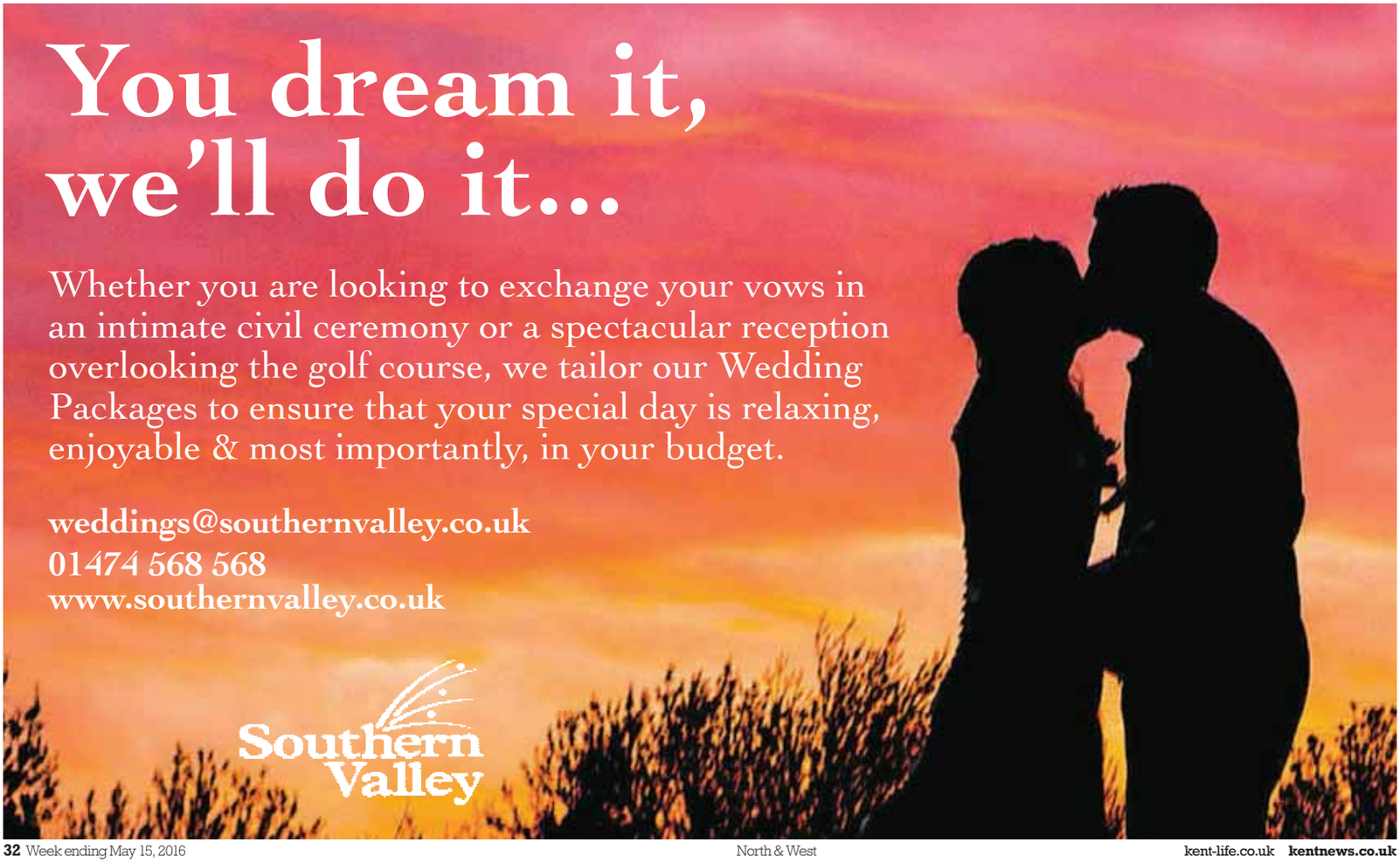
South Africa, £10 from Sainsbury's.

A ripe, generous style with appealing scents of dark chocolate, cedar and aniseed, this leading producer shows a silky, supple, elegant side of the variety with blackberries, cassis and bittersweet chocolate flavours giving depth and a soft texture that makes it approachable and easy to drink.

Errazuriz Max Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon 2013

Chile, £14.35 from Waitrose.

Complex and structured, aromas of blackberries, herbs and spice are followed by baskets of ripe black fruits with a fine acidity bringing a juicy freshness to the wine that you often find in Chilean cabernets. A terrific example from one of Chile's finest wineries and worth the splurge.



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A. Ken Block
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The promoter's decision is final. Usual terms and conditions apply details of which can be found on our website www.kentnews.co.uk. Please note if you should enter after the closing deadline of Tuesday May 24, 2016, your entry will not be valid, but you still may be charged. Texts cost your standard network rate, SMS services are provided by Text Local. Helpline: 01244 752299. Alternatively enter by post to Lydden Hill Competition, Archant KOS Media, Suite 104, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PP including your answer, name, address, postcode and contact telephone number.

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COMEDIAN: Adam Hills will be performing his show Clown Heart at Dartford's Orchard Theatre

The Last Leg host brings his comedy show to Dartford

Adam Hills says his show Clown Heart is about 'laughing in the face of death'

HOST of Channel 4's The Last Leg Adam Hills will be bringing his new comedy show to Dartford.

The comedian - who is often referred to as 'the nicest man in comedy' - previously won best breakthrough act at the British Comedy Awards in 2013.

The Last Leg also won best entertainment programme at last year's Royal Television Society Awards.

Mr Hills will be performing his show Clown Heart at the Orchard Theatre on June 26.

And he is looking forward to performing on stage.

He explained: "I love the freedom of live comedy.

"I have 60 minutes of material, but each show lasts 90 minutes.

"Every night I try and improvise 30 minutes based on who is in the crowd. Otherwise, I'd get bored doing the same show over and over again," he added.

"I love the spontaneity of things happening in the moment, and I genuinely like meeting people. It's like compering my own show.

"Also, the audience feel like they've been at something special rather than merely watching a guy spout the same stuff every night.

"Because of that, I really feel a real connection with them. I want them to have a lovely 90 minutes and then float out of the room."

He added: "During the last tour, I had a preshow ritual of going tenpin bowling every night. But in Barnstaple, I didn't have time before the show, so I decided to take the audience bowling afterwards. I told them I was going to do it, but they thought it was a joke. I had to keep telling them I was serious.

"So at the end of the show, I took 240 people – about half the audience – along to the bowling alley. As well as bowling, we did karaoke, the arcades and air hockey.

"We stayed there until one in the morning. One lovely sixty something couple told me that was the first time they had been bowling for 20 years. As I left, another couple in their late 40s were still playing air hockey and just giggling."

Talking about his new show, Clown Heart, he added: "It's about what's going on in my life, having kids and losing parents.

"It is sometimes a tough area to go into, but the crux of the show is a story about when my daughter was four and asking about death because my father had just passed away," he said.

"She asked, 'Am I going to die?'

"I replied, 'Yes, but how about we have as much fun as we can because we're here?' At one of my shows, I met a guy with cancer.

"He did this thing called Naked Tuesday, so I did it with him. We recreated the famous naked photo of John and Yoko. He became an inspiration for me.

"'Clown Heart' is a show about laughing in the face of death.

"We all know that death is going to have the last laugh, so we have to get in there first.

"A lot of palliative care nurses have said to me that my message strikes a chord with them – and that's lovely to hear."

The show will be starting at 8pm and tickets are £22.50.

For more information or to book tickets to the performance you can visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or alternatively call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

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By Molly Kersey-Law
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A VARIETY of local produce will be showcased at this year's annual Kent County Show.

The three-day event will be taking place at the Kent Showground in Detling.

Visitors will be able to explore the food marquee, cheese and wine tent and Produced in Kent area.

Show manager Lucy Hegarty explained: "Every year we look at what our visitors like to experience, and each year one of the most popular activities is to explore the food we offer.

"Last year we looked at expanding the catering court offer, and invited more local and artisan street food producers.

"This proved very popular and the number of people commenting on the wonderful selection and quality was heart-warming.

"This year we are incorporating a new 'beer and cider festival'. Kent is such an important county when it comes to beer and cider, and it is only right that visitors to our show can sample some of the best refreshments in the UK."

SHOW: The three-day event will be taking place in July

The beer and cider festival is being co-organised by Orpington business The Craft Beer Man.

Produced in Kent will have an area dedicated to local artisan producers, who will be selling their goods and talking to visitors about where they source ingredients and how they make their products.

Rosie Gouldsworthy, trade stand co-ordinator, said: "One of the most popular areas of the Kent County Show is the large international food marquee.

"We have over 40 stands from both around the world and here in Kent. Continental Cottage will have a range of authentic German salami's and Foxdenton Estate will be bringing their range of award winning English gin liqueurs.

"Food tent visitors will also be able to sample Nim's Fruit Crisps - a local company producing healthy fruit snacks from their own factory in Kent.

"For visitors wanting a little more indulgence we have The Chocolate Hut, with gourmet brownies and American inspired tray bakes."

The event runs from July 8 to 10, from 8am to 6pm.

For details, visit www.kentshowground.co.uk.

A Broadstairs folk festival

TICKETS to Broadstairs Folk Week, which runs from August 5 to 12, are now available.

Events will be taking place in venues around the town.

For details, visit www.broadstairsfolkweek.org.uk.

Musical due in Canterbury

MUSICAL Annie will be performed on stage at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre.

The show stars Leslie Joseph as Miss Hannigan and features well-known songs Hard Knock Life and Tomorrow.

It will run from May 23 to 28.

Call 01227 787787 for further details.

Family-friendly screening

FAMILY-friendly film Thomas and Friends: The Great Race will be screened at Bluewater Shopping Centre's Cinema de Lux on May 20 and 21 at 11am.

For details, visit www.showcasecinemas.co.uk.

The story of Elle Woods

HIT musical Legally Blonde will be performed at Bromley's Churchill Theatre.

It tells the story of Elle Woods, who enrols at Harvard Law School after being dumped by her boyfriend Warner.

It runs from May 24 to 28.

Visit www.churchilltheatre.co.uk to book.

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PICK-UP POINTS NATIONWIDE

Dartford does Full Monty

SIMON Beaufoy's The Full Monty will be performed at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, from February 13 to 18 2017.

There will be shows at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Call 01322 220000 to book.

Jazz singer will perform

JAZZ singer Clare Teal and her Mini Big Band will be performing at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on May 28.

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets range from £25 to £30.

For more details, or to book, visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

UB40 due in Folkestone

BAND UB40 will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on October 18 - the only Kent date on their tour.

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets can be booked at www.atgtickets.com/folkestone

Frankenstein adaptation

A STAGE adaptation of Mary Shelley's gothic horror story Frankenstein will be performed at the Theatre Royal Margate.

The performance will take place on November 12 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £15 or £13 with concessions.

Visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com to book.

Painter unveils her new Greenhithe exhibition

By Molly Kersey-Law
molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

CRITICALLY-acclaimed artist Emma Grzonkowski will be unveiling a new exhibition of her work in Greenhithe.

The contemporary painter will be exhibiting her work at Castle Galleries in Bluewater Shopping Centre next week.

Ms Grzonkowski has created a number of large-scale works and she became a professional artist some six years ago - including pieces Metamorphosis and Transcendence.

Speaking about her upcoming exhibition she explained: "My latest exhibition is a representation of all the deep emotion I have felt during my life and how art has helped me process and overcome pain and difficulty.

"I'm very excited to be exhibiting my work in Kent."

The 28-year-old became a professional artist when she was still an undergraduate.

Ms Grzonkowski was studying for a degree in fine art at the University of Chester.

During her final year of study in 2009 she was discovered by Glyn Washington - the founder and director of UK fine art publisher Washington Green Fine Art, which owns the Castle Fine Art retail network.

Peter Gilby, gallery manager for Bluewater's Castle Galleries, said: "We are very excited to welcome Emma to the gallery.

"It will be interesting to see the viewer really engage with the intensity of emotions conveyed through the paintings, and we have no doubt that they will be snapped up very quickly."

Ms Grzonkowski will be appearing at the gallery to unveil the exhibition on May 21.

She will be there between 1pm and 4pm.

The exhibition will then be running at the gallery for a further week.

Pieces of her artwork can either be purchased from the gallery or online.

For more information about Ms Grzonkowski's work you can visit www.castlegalleries.com.

PAINTER: Metamorphosis will be featured in the exhibition

ART: Emma Grzonkowski's Transcendence

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Meeting with the 'salad saviour' Peter Gordon

Ella Walker sat down with New Zealand-born chef Peter Gordon to discuss his latest book, Savour

SALADS can be limp, boring and vinegary if the wrong chef made the dressing but, according to New Zealand-born chef Peter Gordon, there's more to salad than sad leaves of iceberg lettuce.

Upstairs at his Marylebone restaurant in London, The Providores & Tapa Room, he's celebrating the launch of his latest book, Savour, a tome dedicated entirely to salads, by laying on a whole spread of them.

Canapes on china spoons circulate the room, delicately balanced with mouthfuls of seared salmon, duck and fig, and burrata topped with a tomato and mango dressing, before we pile into our seats and get cracking on the starters.

There's miso baked aubergine with feta, roast parsnips with halloumi and smoky shavings of apple, as well as puy lentils mixed with pomegranate, roasted grapes, chilli, mint and basil. As you can tell, these are not exactly your standard 'garden salad on the side', this is salad Peter - the "godfather" of fusion cuisine - Gordon-style.

Over Thai-style gammon hock, with macadamia nuts in a hot and sour tamarind caramel, alongside kale and preserved lemon couscous (very moreish) and a bowl of chickpeas with feta and cumin, he tells me he's been cooking since he was four years old.

"As a child, animal carcasses would be hanging from hooks in the house. We deep-fried everything in beef fat," he remembers.

CHEF: Peter Gordon has released new book Saviour

When Gordon was seven, he and his family were prepping for a barbecue when disaster struck.

He was trying to get up high enough to look into a pot on the stove, when he slipped, grabbing hold of it on the way down, knocking the vat of boiling fat onto himself as he fell.

He still bears the burn scars on the right side of his neck and arm.

"I had to have a skin graft and I missed a year of school, but it didn't put me off cooking," he explains matter-of-factly.

"I never even liked the taste of beef fat, and I love deep-fat frying.

"When my parents divorced, my mum started deep-frying everything in sunflower oil and I was like, 'Yes. That's so much better'."

Although there are moments of deep-fat frying in Savour - yes, even in a book about salad - if there's one thing Gordon wants people to take from the new book, aside from the fact that salads are suitable whatever the season, it's "not to pour boiling water on couscous."

"It'll never stick together again if you use tepid water," he promises in garrulous fashion.

Mr Gordon, in his early 50s, who is of Scottish and Maori descent and now based permanently in London, has no qualms about voicing how proud he is of Savour, and it's rather refreshing.

Maidstone exhibition

ARTIST Brendan Cullen will be exhibiting his sculptures at Maidstone's Below 65 Gallery from May 3 to 28.

Wall-based drawings and photographic works created by Mr Cullen's invited guest artists - Karen Crosby, Alex Edwards and David James - are also on display.

For more information about the exhibition and the artist, please visit www.brendancullen.co.uk.

Classic cars displayed

THE Faversham Transport Weekend will be taking place on May 21 and 22.

The event starts at 10am on the Saturday, when a vintage bus display will be taking place and a number of bus rides will be offered to visitors.

A classic car show will be taking place on the Sunday.

A new area on Stone Street will be showcasing more than 20 Jaguars.

The tale of King Arthur

MONTY Python's Spamalot will be performed at Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre from July 6 to 9.

The musical has been created by Eric Idle and John Du Prez.

It tells the tale of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table and features songs He Is Not Dead Yet and Always Look on the Bright Side of Life.

Call 01622 758611 to book.

Julian Clary's comedy

COMEDIAN Julian Clary will be bringing his new stand-up show to Folkestone in October.

The Joy of Mincing will be performed at the Leas Cliff Hall on October 30.

Mr Clary will be telling stories from his comedy career, which has spanned some three decades.

The show starts at 8pm and you can visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone for tickets.

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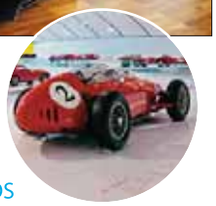

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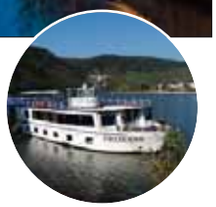
INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Return rail travel from London St Pancras or Ebbsfleet • 6 nights half board hotel in Konigswinter • All excursions and rail journeys • Transfers abroad



Amsterdam to Bruges River Cruise

Escorted Holiday by Rail or Air

19 September, 2016 • Quote: AB9-KOS

Join us on our private charter of MPS Princess with great food and service and a fun and friendly atmosphere. We start in Amsterdam and have a full day and two evenings to explore before sailing to Kinderdijk, which has 19 windmills and a landscape straight from a Rembrandt masterpiece before heading for a harbour cruise in Rotterdam. Sailing into Belgium, we visit Antwerp - the diamond capital, and stunning architecture of Ghent before arriving in Bruges with a full day and two evenings to enjoy before returning to the UK.

INCLUDED: Escorted return rail travel from London St Pancras or Ebbsfleet or return flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 7 night cruise sharing a twin rear cabin on Main Deck - upgrades available • Beer, wine, & soft drinks served at lunch and dinner and from 6pm to midnight at the bar • Morning and afternoon coffee/tea • Buffet breakfasts and lunches • Dinner served at your table - 4 courses • Late night snacks • Captain's dinner - 5 courses • Entertainment • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board

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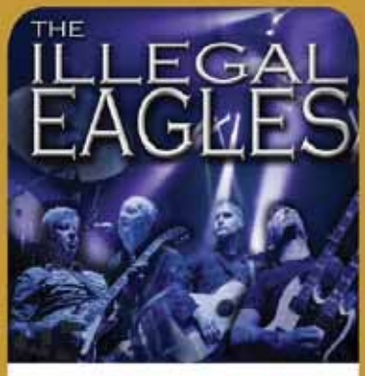

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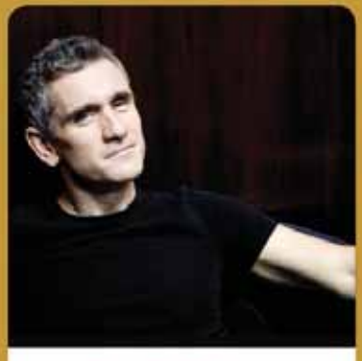
Sun 10 July



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We voted Bolton for Manston!

HENRY Bolton was wrong when he 'fumed' over what he called tribal politics, when he lost the chance to be the next police and crime commissioner in Kent [KoS, last week].

For a lot of us it was tactical voting, because he is chairman of the Manston Airport support group Why Not Manston.

A Burrows,
via email

We didn't vote Bolton for Ukip!

HENRY Bolton is, of course, quite right to say the county should not have voted 'tribally' for the PCC - but if he truly believed that, why on earth would he stand as the Ukip candidate?

The party divides opinion like no other and the majority would not vote for them regardless of the quality of their candidate. For someone who claims to be politically astute, I'd say that's just one good reason why we should be pleased Mr Bolton didn't win.

C Bedford,
Sevenoaks

This week's pro EU letter...

IN reply to last week's Brexit letters, I first point out to Mr Granger that it was not the EU but George Osborne who has pushed our national debt to £1.6 trillion by loading it with such as further bank bailouts and quietly last year another £60bn of housing association debts to facilitate their sell off, among others.

Further, PFI loans were brought in by John Major; extended by Blair & Brown, and now continued by Cameron as PF2 which is just as bad.

As for Mr Bullen, Stalin's Russia was hardly in a position to invade anywhere after the Second World War, and then diverted their efforts into rebuilding, putting their nuclear deterrent in place, as well as clamping down on any rebellions.

R Webb also complains about Cameron's tactics. I've no interest in the PM's fudged 'deal' but he mud-slings at students of whom regular polls state a majority want to stay in. Does he or she have any independent evidence for claims of their supposed gullibility?

The only person who made sense last week was, of course, Green MEP Keith Taylor and I fully back his calls to remain in the EU, despite the current set up and problems, all of which need democratic solutions.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

...and opponents may read here

IT IS illogical of Green MEP Keith Taylor to offer opposition to the TTIP as an argument for staying in the EU. While it is true that this secretive trade deal would be disastrous for the NHS, and indeed all public services, can he not see that, were we to vote to leave on June 23, we would no longer be subject to its provisions? Corporate greed can be defeated at a national level as well as at a pan European one.

Given that not too long ago the Green party took the honourable position of seeking to leave the EU, it is unfortunate that many well meaning people, who are concerned with the welfare of the environment, have been deceived by incessant propaganda into believing the European Union supports green causes, yet the environmental lobby could not be more cruelly deceived.

One of the reasons that Brussels is supported by multi-national companies is precisely because it responds to their often corrupt lobbying and uses its regulatory powers to ensure that nothing stands in the way of their profits.

The common agricultural policy has destroyed efficient and sustainable farming within the EU, while it also undermines Third World producers, who are unable to compete in closed European markets, yet see their own trade undercut by large scale dumping from heavily subsidised EU farmers.

The common fisheries policy has decimated the British fishing industry, ensuring that more fish have been thrown back dead in discards, or landed illegally, than are landed legitimately.

No one who believes in green policies should support the continuing existence of the EU.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

LETTER OF THE WEEK

EU exit would solve live export problem

SOME commentators pursue pet issues, but the facts are indisputable.

We oppose live exports to slaughter because of the unnecessarily long journeys involved.

In 2012, the EU reviewed regulations on the welfare of animals in transit, declaring that compliance, policing and enforcement are very unsatisfactory.

Responding, animal welfare groups organised a one million signature petition to reduce the regulations to a maximum journey time to slaughter to eight hours, replacing the unlimited time presently allowed. The EU decided by a sizeable majority to call for eight hours to be implemented, but this has not happened because the EU commission cannot get agreement from all EU states, including the UK, for legislative action.

This is a clear example of how democratic resolve is thwarted by the commission. Better to leave the EU altogether and to improve existing regulations accepting the eight-hour proposal for UK journeys, with allowance for farmers in remote areas. Exports would cease because of the journey time constraints.

Encouraged by Craig Mackinlay's compassionate and determined support for our campaign, we are also delighted the Defra minister, George Eustace, acknowledges that both EU and UK legislation must change.

No one I know wants to eat the flesh of an animal which has on its way to slaughter, been terrified, exhausted, dehydrated and put in the hands, as has been the case at Ramsgate, of shippers convicted of causing unnecessary suffering to animals in their charge.

Reg Bell
Thanet Against Live Exports

Support nurses pay challenge

ONCE again, the government is eroding nursing pay. Despite the one per cent pay rise awarded by the government earlier this year, nurses' pay has dropped to about 14 per cent behind the cost of living from the time when David Cameron came to power in 2010.

Announcing their decision to keep nursing on the shortage occupation list following lobbying by the Royal College of Nursing the migration advisory committee said: "The restraint on nurses' pay instituted by the government was presented to us, and in the evidence to the pay review bodies, as an immutable fact. It is not. It is a choice."

It is a choice and one the government have chosen not to make. We do not have enough nursing staff to give the care our communities need in no small part because they are not valued by this government. It's just not good enough, which is why we're asking members of the public to support the RCN's campaign for fair pay for nursing staff.

Let's tell the government that they need to value nursing staff more. Thousands of nursing staff across the south east region are dedicated to caring for you, 24hrs a day, 365 days a year, whatever your illness or condition. Please show your support for us.

Karen Buggins & Sharon Middleton
Staff nurse, Canterbury; Screening and immunisation coordinator, Ashford

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Norton, near Faversham

by **Colin Miles**

WIN GREAT TICKETS EVERY MONTH!

IN February, March, April, May and June, if your picture appears on this page, you'll be included in a monthly draw to win a pair of tickets to the Leeds Castle Classical Concert - one of the highlights of the year and which takes place on July 9.

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Foster Care Fortnight

Is it time for you to take next step?

INFORMATION: Foster Care Fortnight can answer your questions

IF YOU have ever considered becoming a foster carer then there in no better time than now to take the plunge and find out more about a hugely rewarding occupation.

Foster Care Fortnight, an annual event designed to draw attention to the benefits of foster care and the support mechanisms which are in place for those who open their hearts and their homes to youngsters.

Organised by fostering charity, The Fostering Network, the campaign showcases the commitment, passion and dedication of foster carers. It also supports fostering services to highlight the need for more foster carers.

Nationally, some 9,070 new foster families are needed in the next 12 months alone to care for a range of children, with the greatest need being for foster carers for older children, sibling groups, disabled children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

The theme for this year's Foster Care Fortnight is Time to Foster, Time to Care; spreading the message that for many prospective foster carers now is the time to care and now is the time to foster.

The Fostering Network estimates that every 20 minutes across the UK a child comes into care in need of a foster family.

This means that during Foster Care Fortnight more than 1,000 children will require a foster family.

As a result, Kent County Council has found huge numbers of children needing loving homes in the past year.

The local authority is now calling for anyone who could offer a stable and loving home to children to step forward.

Those who foster with KCC will receive local support in their community as well as a local social workers.

There is also the opportunity to support unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who have often fled traumatic home lives and taken harrowing journeys to arrive in the county with no one to care for them.

KCC wants to recruit 150 more households to its fostering service this year.

Cabinet member for specialist children's services, Peter Oakford, said: "Our foster carers do an amazing job supporting vulnerable children from our own county and those who have fled their homelands to come to Kent.

"Whether you foster a disabled child, a teenager or an unaccompanied asylum seeking young person, KCC makes sure you have all the skills and support you need to make sure you can do the best you can for the child in your care.

"Few roles are as rewarding as being a foster carer, knowing that the love and support you offer can change the course of a child's life."

Fostering is a paid role, and age, experience and marital status are no barrier.

Foster carers with KCC get round-the-clock support and advice, they get their own 'mentor' – an experienced foster carer to support them through their first months, their own personal development plan, a chance to get new qualifications, payment for new skills and local support groups for both carers and their birth children.

■ Those wanting to put themselves forward are encouraged to call 03000 420002 or visit www.kenfostering.co.uk to find out more.

Getting your books in order is essential

YOU may not realise it but chartered accounts William Giles has been involved with fostering for more than 25 years when it was advisor in the formation of the very first independent fostering agency, so there is not much about fostering tax and accounts that it doesn't know.

It has a specialist foster carer team which knows all the quirks of fostering and are able to give you good solid advice in language that you can understand.

All its foster carer clients are looked after by their own foster carer consultant. Its clients are welcome to phone, e-mail or pop in if they wish - offering a personal service is absolutely key to us.

So do you need an accountant?

Well if you need help to prepare your tax return, expenses claims or advice on tax and National Insurance then the answer is going to be yes.

All foster carers are self-employed and have to submit self-assessment returns to HMRC.

Although completing your tax return online is relatively straight forward, you do have to be aware of the tax deadlines, as penalties are applied for late submission, regardless of whether you have any tax due.

TAX: Don't let the strain of tax returns impact on your caring

However National Insurance exemptions and credits are often overlooked when carers do their own returns so they pay more tax than they should.

If your life is hectic and you would like to be reminded of the deadlines or talk to HMRC on your behalf, it is better to get help because tax penalties can quickly get out of control.

One carer William Giles took on was more than nine months late completing his return, which had already cost him in excess of £1,300 in penalties. It had him all up to date within a week.

William Giles is based in Sittingbourne.

For more information, see below.

HAPPY: Can you find space in your home and heart?

Supporting you at every stage

YOU don't have to be married, you don't need to be employed and you don't need a big house.

But to become a foster carer, you do need a spare room and space in your life to help a vulnerable child through a crisis.

The children referred to Chrysalis Care come from every background, every age-range, every area and from every ethnic and cultural group, and we need to find foster carers to match to these children.

We generally only consider people where at least one partner (if it is a couple) is over the age of 25. A third of our carers are single carers.

Contact Chrysalis Care if you want to become a foster carer and benefit from our many, many years of experience.

Since 1997, Chrysalis Care has established an excellent reputation in fostering children, working with over 25 different local authorities in and around London.

We have a dedicated multi-professional children's services team whose sole purpose is to provide extra practical support to the foster carers, children and young people placed with Chrysalis Care.

This includes play therapy, support with transport to contact; one-to-one mentoring; education support and preparation for independence.

williams giles
Chartered Accountants

www.williamsgiles.co.uk
@fosteringtax

Fixed Fee Tax Return Service

Our dedicated friendly team of Foster Carer specialists, with over 60 years experience between them, fully understand the unique situation that Foster Carers find themselves in and have developed a Fixed Fee Tax Return Service tailored to meet these very specific needs.

The Williams Giles personal service ensures that you are allocated your own dedicated tax consultant who you can contact directly by phone or e-mail.

We will...

- Calculate your taxable income
- Prepare your Self Assessment Tax Return
- Calculate how much tax and National Insurance you have to pay and advise you how and when to pay it
- Be available for help and advice throughout the year

Contact our Foster Carer Tax Team for independent expert advice.

phone: 01795 478044 | email: fostering@williamsgiles.co.uk
www.williamsgiles.co.uk | @fosteringtax

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transforming lives

COULD YOU FOSTER?

We can provide you with a great opportunity to help transform children's lives

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- You don't need to be employed
- You don't need a big house
- You **do** need a spare room and space in your life to help a vulnerable child to achieve

As a Chrysalis Care foster carer you will receive:

- 24-hour professional support
- Excellent remuneration
- Job satisfaction
- Comprehensive training
- Access to a range of children's services

We are also looking for specialist foster carers who can provide a home to **teenagers, a parent and child, children with disabilities** and carers who are interested in **remand fostering**.

If you are considering becoming a foster carer, or would like to find out more about us, **please call: 0208 298 2800**

or visit our website: www.chrysaliscarefostering.org

driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

TOP 10 PLACING: the NX just missed out on top honours

RUNNER-UP: the IS saloon

DRIVER POWER NO1: the Lexus RX also has the comfiest seats

Lexus "smashes" top survey findings

BRAND UPDATE: Toyota's luxury arm takes half of Top 10 places to dominate prestigious survey by major motoring website and magazine

LEXUS won't mind too much about how it missed a clean sweep of podium places in the coveted Auto Express Driver Power Survey.

Having taken first and second place with its RX luxury SUV and IS saloon respectively, it narrowly missed out on third for the GS executive saloon, due to the perennially rugged Land Cruiser from sister brand Toyota.

The disappointment was also eased by the Japanese premium marque's NX crossover and CT hatchback also appearing in the survey's Top 10, while the line-up's all-new new RC coupe and LS limousine probably only missed out on high placings because they simply haven't sold in the numbers needed to qualify for the survey.

This emphatic performance was not lost on Auto Express, which said Lexus had simply "smashed" its survey, which collates the real-world experiences and opinions of almost 50,000 motorists.

The result also vindicates hybrid engine technology; having tried to attack European premium marques like Mercedes-Benz and BMW on the diesel front, Lexus decided to concentrate on its speciality, petrol-electric hybrid powertrains.

Not only have these proved to be reliable, but Lexus's faith in the technology has been boosted by the increasing concern about the higher NOX (nitrous oxide) emissions of diesel cars, potential exacerbating respiratory illnesses.

RUNNER-UP: the IS saloon

And for those who still want petrol only, Lexus does give options, notably the lively 2.0-litre turbocharged version of the IS – its rival to the BMW 3 Series – launched last year.

After a few blind alleys, Lexus also seems to have found its way with a corporate style: the latest Lexus grille has the potential to become as recognisable as German counterparts, while the SUV/crossover styling of the NX and RX models is particularly distinctive, the latter's interior being highly praised too by Auto Express and especially for having the "comfiest" seats.

» Read more of Steve's motoring reviews in…
KENT LIFE

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Subaru does it differently - once again

Never one to do things the straightforward way, Subaru has pitched its Levorg estate into a niche all its own, writes **Steve Loader...**

Subaru Levorg 1.6i GT Lineartronic

Price:	from £27,495
Driving appeal:	★★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★
How green?:	★★★
Best rival:	SEAT Leon ST X-perience

LIFE is rarely dull with Subaru.

With origins in the aircraft industry rather than automotive, it always seems to shoot for the stars featured on its bonnet badge, gathering praise for low slung and powerful horizontally-opposed 'boxer' engines, preference for all-wheel drive, and an enviable rally heritage – mainstream, it is not.

Its latest car, the Levorg doesn't fit any UK market niche and even the name is an oddball; it could be a superhero's or something from Harry Potter, but is supposedly an amalgamation of Legacy, Revolution and Touring.

Fear not, I won't delve deep on this: suffice to say that Subaru hopes it will stir memories of the now defunct Legacy estate, which was perhaps a bit hefty for UK tastes and upstaged anyway by the rugged Outback spin-off model.

So the Levorg is more compact than the Legacy and a demon to drive, with a lovely free-revving 168bhp 1.6-litre boxer unit beneath a bulging bonnet, excellent handling derived from Subaru's rally-bred WRX STi model, plus a ride that simply doesn't deserve to be so composed on such a sporting car.

The grip and cornering poise is outrageously good and helped by taut steering feedback and the engine weight being so low down.

The catch? A lumbering continuously variable auto gearbox; you really do need to use the six-speed manual override option to make the most of the engine and even this suffers from "bridge to engine room" delay – in short, it needs a manual gearbox.

But there is none – at least for now. Indeed, there is just one model in the range and it's not cheap to buy or run: £27,495, an official combined 39.9mpg that looks optimistic, plus £180/year road tax.

That said, the Levorg comes with all the kit you could expect at this level, build quality is rock solid, the cabin is comfortable – the leather seats are top notch - and the controls are well-organised.

It also works well as an estate: considering there is another transmission beneath the rear floor, the load space is surprisingly roomy with generous extra stowage beneath the boot floor – but no spare wheel.

With seats up, boot space measures 522 litres, better than a Ford Focus Estate (476) but a way off the VW Golf Estate (605). Quick release levers then allow the seats to fold fully flat to create a crammable 1,446-litre maximum – the Golf delivers 1,620.

So, even if the amalgamation of its name is dubious, and leaving aside the equally dodgy gearbox, the Levorg does offer a potent combination of sportiness, all-wheel drive, and estate car practicality. Goodness, even the 1,500-kilo braked towing weight is also excellent for a car of this size.

Place an order for a new car between 23rd April – 31st May and get 2 Years Free Servicing!

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For more details visit:
www.kenthyundai.co.uk

FUEL CONSUMPTION MPG (L/100KM) FOR HYUNDAI RANGE: URBAN 18.0 (15.7) – 80.7 (3.5), EXTRA URBAN 32.8 (8.6) – 94.2 (3.0), COMBINED 25.2 (11.2) – 88.3 (3.2), CO_2 EMISSIONS 261 – 84G/KM. FUEL CONSUMPTION: FIGURES SHOWN ARE BASED ON OFFICIAL EU TEST FIGURES. THESE ARE TO BE USED AS A GUIDE FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES AND MAY NOT REFLECT ALL DRIVING RESULTS. *2 YEARS FREE SERVICING ONLY TO BE VALID AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS OR MEDWAY HYUNDAI.

i10 S 1.0, 42 monthly payments of £152.94, Customer deposit £151.00, Hyundai deposit contribution Total £151.00, Cash price of vehicle £7,995.00, Total amount of credit £6,423.48, Interest charges £1,286.73, Total amount payable £9,281.73, Optional final payment £2,707.25, Duration of agreement 42 months, Fixed rate of interest per year 3.55% Mileage per annum 10,000 Representative 6.9% APR. **New i20 S 1.2,** 42 monthly payments of £162.84, Customer deposit £162.00, Hyundai manufactures deposit £1,000 , Total £1,162.00, Cash price of vehicle £9,995.00, Total amount of credit £8,833.00, Interest charges £1499.78, Total amount payable £11,494.78, Optional final payment £3493.50, Duration of agreement 42 months, Rate of interest % (fixed) 3.55% p.a. Estimated annual mileage 10,000. Excess mileage charge per mile 14.9p per mile 6.9% APR. **Tucson 1.7 CRDI 116PS Blue Drive, 42** Monthly payments of £209.00, Customer deposit of £2,500.00, Hyundai deposit contribution of £1,500, Total £4,000, Cash price of Vehicle £17,720.00, Total amount of credit £13,720.00, Interest charges £2,568.50, Total amount payable £20,288.50, Optional final payment £7,510.50, Duration of agreement 42 months, APR % 6.9% p.a, Excess mileage 14.9p, Estimated annual mileage. Terms and conditions apply.

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Women Seeking

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GENUINE, GSH, attractive, outgoing professional female, 55. Enjoys keeping fit, socialising and travel, WLTM similar male for relationship. **Text only Mailbox: 5453851**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

MATURE lady early 80s, family orientated, likes dancing, holidays especially cruising, WLTM similar aged gentleman with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421427**

KIM, 32yrs, attractive blonde lady seeks discreet gent for daytime distractions. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 421657**

JO, mature understanding worldly Essex lady, seeks generous gent for regular fetish fantasy role-play, discretion assured. **Text only Mailbox: 5320299**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

FEMALE, blue eyes, slim and pretty, from South Africa, young fifties, seeking a sincere, retired gentleman, who resides close to the sea. **Text only Mailbox: 5456242**

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. **Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box: 420237**

SINGLE late 60s female, n/s, GSOH, likes going out and being active, not fun on my own, seeking single male, 66-70, n/s, with GSOH, to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421433**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

MATURE lady early 80s, family orientated, likes dancing, holidays especially cruising, WLTM similar aged gentleman with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421429**

KAREN, 42yrs, attractive and broadminded, seeks no strings fun with chap any age, must be discreet. **Tel: 0906 515 3038 Box: 407953**

ORIENTAL lady, honest, caring, loves walking, WLTM a reliable, sincere man for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5443434**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

FEMALE, young 58, 5ft2, size 14, blonde, bubbly, GSOH, warm, loving, kind and caring, loves music, animals, seaside, looking for that special someone. **Text only Mailbox: 4715158**

SUSIE, 42yrs loves life, educated, brunette, own home, works to hard and now wants some fun. If you are a kind gent 30+ then text me for a chat. **Box: 4187170**

Customer support
Call **0207 720 7130** Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm
or email us at **support@jmediauk.co.uk**

GENUINE single female 49, seeking good-natured, intelligent, polite, single male for friendship/relationship. **Text only to Mailbox: 4198603**

DIANNA, petite blonde lady, 38yrs, divorced, no kids, wants to spice up her life with new male friends, 35+, might lead to more who knows but no strings. ACA. **Box: 4027026**

KIND, caring lady of African origin, living in UK for past 20 years, looking for a gentleman who is kind and caring, must have a GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421041**

ANGELA, 53, African origin, looking for a kind, genuine, caring gentleman, 60 years +. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421039**

SINGLE slim female, 68, n/s, GSOH, likes cooking, walking etc, seeks male, single, slim 65-70, n/s, with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420091**

SLIM female GSOH, 5'3, Likes walking, pub lunches, days out, looking for soul mate, smart appearance, similar interests N/S GSOH, easy going. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4762600**

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889**

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883**

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955**

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741**

ESSEX lady, mid 60's, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537**

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117**

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243**

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793**

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435**

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603**

PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081**

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably, older, N/S male with own car. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received. mydate24

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

JOHN, 42yrs sophisticated business man wanting a lady by his side to spoil and entertain. Looks unimportant but must have a super personality and kind manner. **Box 4086072**

FRIENDLY passionate male, 55, 6ft, medium build, clean, discreet, lots of TLC to offer, seeks female for fun times. Canterbury **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381222**

OUTGOING male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793**

MALE, 58, very outgoing, looking for attractive female, slim to medium build, for adult fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421883**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE, 55 looking for mature lady for outings and adult fun, easy going, GSOH, nice looking and a bit shy. **Text only Mailbox: 4922399**

YOUNG 50s male looking for discreet daytime kisses and cuddles with nice female. Kent and Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421601**

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383**

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127**

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349**

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTM professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569**

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403**

FEMININE sensual female, slim-medium build wanted by slim, kind male for daytime meets, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414809**

JIM 45, slim 5'8, blue eyes, short brown hair, very fit, would like to meet older lady for regular N S A fun. East Sussex. **Text only Mailbox: 4529089**

NEIL, Looking to meet lady for fun, possible LTR with someone special, accom and travel w/Sussex, age/looks unimportant. **Text only Mailbox: 4435323**

WIDOWER 67, N/S, likes real ale, country music, gardening, DIY, seeks N/S female for lots of TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381143**

CHRIS widower, likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191**

MALE, 6ft, slim, 67, divorced, retired, likes social drinks, meals out, nights in and all other, WLTM lady with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421351**

MATURE cross dressing guy, seeking lady willing to apply a full make over and give a manicure and pedicure. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421341**

KEN 61, 6ft, slim, likes socialising, drinking, animals, countryside, seaside, meals out, seeks similar lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333017**

MALE 50, GSOH, looking for soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387485**

SHY male seeks confident, strong willed lady, to take the lead for mutual fun, looks/age unimportant. ACA **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421223**

MALE, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

MALE, 54, looking for discreet lady, 60-70, for adult fun and a special friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421085**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

BARRY, 50, 6ft, well built, seeks lovely lady for good times, loving and enjoying life. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421047**

DAVE 64 solvent, working, not bad looking, would like to meet slim, fun to be with female, 50 to 60, to get to know. Chelmsford area. **Text only to Mailbox: 4368820**

MALE 38, good-looking, GSOH, seeks lady, 35-55 for laughter and lots of fun. Kent/Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 369301**

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733**

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, likes holidays, reading, cinema, WLTM similar professional lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420767**

MALE, 60, medium build, gosh, seeks attractive female, under 50, for no strings, discreet, daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420621**

CLINT, 37, kind, caring, honest and WLTM someone of any age who is similar and looking for a relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419951**

HEALTHY 61yr old male, N/S, medium build, likes France, cooking, gardening, seeks female, 50-60 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 286360**

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025**

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

NEVILLE 5ft 6ins, Caribbean, likes wine, nights in, seeks female to spend the rest of his life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333911**

DAVE 46, seeks active female for walking, climbing and outdoor fun. Days out and evenings in. Friendly and GSOH. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5338933**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, loves holidays, WLTM a lady for meals out, and to enjoy each others company. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419751**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

HUBERT, lives in Rochester, single, lonely, looking for someone to get together with and make something happen and enjoy the rest of life with! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420049**

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201**

YOUNG 60yr old male, knows how to treat a lady, seeking special lady to spoil for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417909**

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691**

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013**

Gay Seeking

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PETER, bi male, aged 68, inexperienced seeks bi male for fun and friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 5459879**

MALE medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

MATURE bi male seeks similar for fun and friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 4641909**

EASYGOING guy, 62, likes outdoors, countryside, walks, seeks slim, N/S quiet guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333477**

GAY male, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ALAN, 68, straight acting gay man, kind, caring with GSOH, likes sport, art and going on holidays, looking for another gay man. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421529**

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Abbey Court School

"We grow people"

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

We are currently looking for a

TEMPORARY TEACHER for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties

from September - December 2016
MPS/UPS + SEN

Abbey Court School is currently located in pleasant surroundings on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery & Primary) and Strood (Secondary & Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. The school has been judged 'outstanding' in the last 2 Ofsted inspections.

This post would suit newly qualified teachers, or those wishing to gain further experience of SEN. Comprehensive induction and training will be provided. Telephone enquiries and informal visits to the school welcomed

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

.Closing Date: 26th May 2016

For further details and a job description, please contact Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP (01634 338236), stating the position for which you are applying.

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Abbey Court School

"We grow people"

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

We are currently looking for a

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

to join and enhance our high calibre team on a 1 year Fixed Term Contract

Soulbury scale – A range point 2-7 (£34,592 to £40,338) (term time only - pro rata)

Abbey Court School is currently located on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery and Primary) and Strood (Secondary and Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. We are looking for an enthusiastic and experienced Educational Psychologist, with a professional and flexible approach. In essence, somebody with an interest in a special educational setting who is committed to applying interventions over time to enable pupils to achieve best possible outcomes. The post holder will be offered the opportunity to work as an applied psychologist, express their creativity, work holistically and demonstrate their strengths whilst undertaking a wide variety of tasks within the post. The role will require partnership working with pupils, parents, staff and other professionals.

Working hours are 37.5 hours p/w, term time only. Candidates should be HCPC registered Educational Psychologists. The successful candidate will work as part of a multi-professional team at the school. Benefits include: Local Authority pension scheme, induction training, performance management programme and Continuous Professional Development. Visits to the school are welcomed.

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 26th May 2016

For an application pack, or to make an appointment to visit, please contact Mrs Linda Taylor, Business Manager, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP (01634 338236), stating the position for which you are applying.

Please note CV's will not be accepted.

Be part of our successful team

Media Sales office-based
Part-time executive

We are looking for a part-time office-based Sales Executive to work three days a week in our base in Ashford to find new customers for our publications in print and online as we continue to grow.

We are looking for an ambitious person to join our successful sales team. Ideally, you will be an IT literate individual who is tasked and focused with a good eye for detail. You must be able to communicate well both verbally and in writing.

With our excellent product training and our continuous development programme, we'll show you how to develop first class solutions for our customers, cultivate excellent business relationships and present effective and innovative ideas that will provide real value and response for our customers.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- A passion for publishing
- An understanding of brand awareness and advertising solutions
- The ability to produce and action effective ideas and promotions
- Resilience and influential communication skills to overcome objections
- The ability to secure new business

In return we are offering up to £18k basic with bonus OTE potential of 8.4k. This would be paid on a pro rata basis for 3 days ie £10.8k and OTE potential of £5k. The benefits include five weeks annual leave, and a contributory pension and life assurance scheme (after qualifying period). A wide range of voluntary benefits include a cycle scheme, childcarevouchers, contributory private health scheme and Archant Gold (charity matched funding).

If you think you have the talent we require, are ambitious, target driven and want to be part of our growth plans then we want to hear from you immediately.

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You will handle our existing customers' accounts, reinforcing the benefits of longer term print and digital advertising in our titles as well as alerting them to new opportunities.

With our excellent product training and our continuous development programme, we'll show you how to develop first class solutions for our customers, cultivate
excellent business relationships and present effective and innovative ideas that will provide real value and response for our customers.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- A passion for publishing
- An understanding of brand awareness and advertising solutions
- The ability to produce and action effective ideas and promotions
- Proven face-to-face B2B sales experience
- Resilience and influential communication skills to overcome objections
- The ability to secure new business and manage existing accounts
- The self-motivation and organisation to work remotely
- A full valid driving licence

In return we are offering up to £23k basic with bonus OTE potential of £8.4k per annum as well as a company car, laptop and phone.

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AC GOATHAM & SON

We are looking for PSV / D drivers in Sittingbourne area and Rochester (Hoo). We are seeking to employ experienced PSV drivers to operate our coaches (31 seater).

You will be transporting workers between our farms. Experience of driving a tractor is an advantage but not essential.
Candidate must have a full UK or EC driving license and driver qualification CPC.

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Tel: 01634 253424

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE

We Chegworth Valley Ltd hereby give notice that we have made an application to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for the grant of a New Premises Licence to commit to the following licensable activities:-

1. sale by retail of alcohol

In respect of the premises situated at 13, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5TD to be known by the sign of Chegworth Farm Shop.

The application can be viewed at the offices of the Licensing Authority, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council,The Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m, Monday to Friday (except public holidays) or www.sevenoaks.gov.uk. Any person wishing to make representations concerning this application should do so in writing to the above local authority giving in detail stating the grounds of objection and within 28 consecutive days of the submission of the application that is by no later than 4th June 2016.

Any person may make representations on licensing objectives grounds only i.e the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm. Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £5,000.

Stephen Thomas LAW, 8, Grassmere, Leybourne, Kent ME19 5QP Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the applicant.

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

G & J STEELE HOLDING LTD of 236 Pratling Street, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7DG is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an Operating Centre to keep 12 vehicles and 2 trailers at Hillside Works, Old Mill Lane, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7DT.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be effected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd trading as Hanson Aggregates of St Laurence Avenue, Twenty Twenty Industrial Estate, Allington, Maidstone, ME16 OLL is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an Operating Centre to keep 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at Hanson Concrete, Ridham Dock Road, Kemsley, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8SR

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

A C Goatham and Son Limited of Flanders Farm Ratcliffe Highway, Hoo, Rochester ME3 8QE is applying for a licence to use Flanders Farm, Ratcliffe Highway, Hoo, Rochester ME3 8QE as an operating centre for 15 goods vehicles and 20 trailers and to use Street Farm 103 Stoke Road, Hoo, Rochester ME3 9BH as an operating centre for 10 goods vehicles and 12 trailers and to use Griffins Farm Pleasure House Lane, East Sutton, Maidstone ME17 3NW as an operating centre for 4 goods vehicles and 4 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

G & J STEELE PLANT HIRE LTD of 236 Pratling Street, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7DG is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an operating centre to keep 5 goods vehicles and 3 trailers at Hillside Works, Old Mill Lane, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7DT.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be effected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Swale BOROUGH COUNCIL

Licensing Act 2003

Application for a New Premises Licence

Name of Applicant: LINGAIAH SAMY

Premises: Elijah Convenience Store

Proposed Licensable activities:

Sale of alcohol Mon – Sun 7am until 00:00 (midnight)

Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department

Swale Borough Council
Swale House
East Street
Sittingbourne
Kent, ME10 3HT

Objections must be received within 28 days of the date of this notice. – 6th June 2016

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000

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Edwards to step down as captain

Kent's cricket queen calling time on a 20-year England career

Cricket

By Rory Dollard
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

WHEN the emotion of the moment has passed and the time for clear-eyed reflection arrives, Kent's Charlotte Edwards will surely look back with some satisfaction at having helped create an England women's side that will not crumble in her absence.

That is not to say Edwards will go unmissed, for how could any team fail to feel the departure of a player who has at various points in her 20 years been its star name, decade-long captain, primary politician, de-facto team manager and part-time administrator?

But she leaves behind a fully professional set-up – little more than a pipe dream when she debuted as a 16-year-old in 1996 – a respected and ambitious coach in Mark Robinson and a hunger to improve.

The maturation of the women's game came slower than most would have liked, but the presence of players like Edwards – elegant and authentic at the crease, statesmanlike and driven off it – smoothed the wheels of change.

She began to build a body of work that remains by a distance the most impressive in its field, setting the bar for team-mates and opponents alike.

The numbers racked up year on year and she retires from England duty as the top run-scorer and top appearance-maker in women's internationals, not to mention leading out the Three Lions on the small matter of 220 occasions.

STAR: Charlotte Edwards

Pictures: PA

So too did the honours – ICC women's cricketer of the year in 2008, World Cup winning captain in 2009, a Wisden Cricketer of the year in 2014, and an MBE and CBE to put after her name.

In time her successors can harbour realistic hope of matching those achievements, maybe even surpassing them, with greater financial reward, better facilities to help and more fans to watch them do so.

Without Edwards' longevity, dedication and class, progress would almost certainly have been slower and that is her most enduring legacy.

Loft leaves Gills as Edinburgh shuffles pack

Football

GILLINGHAM this week announced a major squad shake-up, with new contracts given to eight players ahead of next season.

John Egan, Mitchell Dickenson, Elliott List, Aaron Morris, Stuart Nelson, Emmanuel Osadebe and Josh Wright were all offered new deals at Priestfield with their existing contracts set to expire in the coming days, while midfielder Darren Oldaker has been offered professional terms at the club.

However, defender Egan turned down the offer, and the Gills will look to seek compensation from his next club due to rules regarding the age of the player.

In addition, manager Justin Edinburgh shuffled his pack further by releasing four players, including club captain Doug Loft, Brennan Dickenson, Jermaine McGlashan and Glenn Morris.

BOSS: Justin Edinburgh

All four players joined the club in the summer of 2014 and Loft scored six goals in his 70 appearances for the Gills.

Like Loft, former Brighton trainee Dickenson played in Sunday's defeat to Millwall, which was his 38th league start for the club.

McGlashan scored seven times in his debut season after joining on a free from Cheltenham Town but has found game time hard to come by in this campaign.

Likewise, former Southend and Aldershot goalkeeper Morris kept three clean sheets in the 11 appearances he made for the Gills, all of which came last season.

Gillingham finished ninth in League One after missing out on a chance to sneak into the play-off places on the last day of the league season last weekend.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

PROUD: Sam Northeast

Captain hails attack in Gloucestershire draw

KENT captain Sam Northeast had nothing but praise for the efforts of his bowlers and their bid to force a final day win over Gloucestershire against all the odds.

"The overall emotion of the team right now is one of disappointment, but they shouldn't feel that way really," said the 26-year-old after the rain-ruined match which ultimately ended a draw.

"We played all the cricket in this match and I was very pleased with the effort of all my bowlers today on what was a pretty flat fourth-day deck. They bent their backs and nearly got the result.

"If it wasn't for that bit of rain this morning we would probably have got the victory.

"We're near at the moment, playing some good cricket and have come a long way since the end of last year. It's an open division and we still have everything to play for."

Kent will look to maintain their unbeaten start to the county championship as they travel to Northampton.

Hennon to fight in front of Sky cameras

SNODLAND welterweight George Hennon faces the biggest night of his career so far, when he fights on the undercard of Ricky Burns' headline bout in front of the Sky Sports cameras in Glasgow.

The unbeaten 21-year-old was only in action last month, when he was victorious at the famous York Hall, and now faces Scottish fighter Sam Ball - also undefeated - at the SSE Hydro on May 28.

Hennon was quoted recently stating his ambition to fight a better quality of opponent, specifically declaring his interest in facing someone similar that's unbeaten who wants to win to present a challenge.

The headlining fight sees Burns takes on Michele Di Rocco for the WBA World super-lightweight title.

UNDERCARD: George Hennon

Wings retain duo after relegation

WELLING United have confirmed a handful of players that are being retained following the campaign's end.

Boss Mark Goldberg has retained the services of forward George Porter and left back Joey Taylor, while Sam Corne and Barney Williams are each contracted already for next season.

It comes after a hugely disappointing season for Welling, in which they finished bottom of the National League and were therefore relegated to the National League South.

Loui Fazakerley and Dean Frost both lost their jobs in the Park View Road dugout as the Wings went on a dismal run of 20 games without a win during 2016.

Goldberg was brought in last month with the aim of trying to get the club promoted back next year.

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